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OPINION METER
This week's poll:

Between Saipan and Tinian, which island should the U.S. Air Force choose for its alternate airfield in the event that Guam's Andersen Air Force Base is unavailable?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

BUSINESS

More consumers are buying the least expensive iPhones and iPads.

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ASIA

A Philippine court grants bail to former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

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LIFE & STYLE

Batman star Christian Bale visits survivors of the Colorado theater shooting.

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INSTEAD OF NEW $15 TOURISM FEE

Govt to hike hotel occupancy tax

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

» Administration, HANMI yet to agree if it's 3 or 5 pct. in 2013

Acting governor Eloy S. Inos said the government will be increasing the hotel occupancy tax in 2013 instead of collecting a new $15 fee on transient occupants of hotels and motels that was supposed to start last July 1. The Fitial administration and the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands have yet to agree, however, on either a 3- or 5-percent tax hike.

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Friedle reported missing

Friedle

On Wednesday July 25, 2012, a missing person report was filed with the Department of Public Safety.

Hubert Siegfried Friedle, 55, was last seen on Monday, July 23, 2012, at about 6pm at a residence in San Antonio. He was wearing a white polo shirt and dark blue short pants. He has sores on both feet and also on his hands.

Friedle was described as 5'6" tall and weighed 180 lbs.

Friedle's car, a red Honda Civic, was discovered parked the next day before lunch hour at Pakpak Beach. The victim's friend picked up the car, which was locked, and drove it home. The victim's per-

See FRIEDLE on Page 4

KagES student's salad wins in healthy lunch competition

» Sixth grader to attend 'state dinner' hosted by first lady

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Huh

The creation of an 11-year-old student from Kagman Elementary School took top honors in the Healthy Lunchtime Challenge, which entitles her to attend a "state dinner" to be hosted by first lady Michelle Obama.

Sixth grader Esther Huh's creative presentation of the "Pitaya Healthy Salad" was chosen as the competition's winner for the Northern Mariana Islands.

Huh expressed joy and excitement upon learning the good news yesterday, saying her win was unexpected. This is

See COMPETITION on Page 4

BRIEF BLAZE
A firefighter hands a fire axe to his colleague on the rooftop of Coffee Care in Sadog Tasi during a brief blaze that broke out in the restaurant's kitchen yesterday morning. A cook and firefighters prevented the blaze from spreading to other parts of the building. No one was reported hurt in the blaze that lasted minutes. FERDIE DE LA TORRE

See story on Page 2

Fitial actions worry Tinian ship recycling investor

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial met with U.S. Office of Insular Affairs director Nik Pula and First International Corp. consultant retired U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Christopher Weaver in Washington, D.C. last week on a planned Tinian ship recycling project, but FIC and other local officials are now raising concerns that a contract may be awarded to another firm despite the CNMI government's assurances of support to FIC for months.

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Local

No more free water for non-indigents on Saipan

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Non-indigent individuals and families on Saipan will soon stop receiving free water deliveries to their households following a decision by Saipan Mayor Donald Flores to stop the service beginning Oct. 1, the start of the new fiscal year.

Henry Hofschneider, the mayor's special adviser, disclosed this to *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, saying that regulations are being finalized for implementation within the year.

The municipality has for many years been providing free water delivery to individuals and families on Saipan who ask for water assistance. Both indigent and non-indigent households are given this assistance as long as they submit a request-application.

Hofschneider said the law that created the municipality authorized the mayor to provide help to those in need of water. The same statute, however, also authorizes the mayor to promulgate regulations imposing fees and charges for this type of service. He said this is the first time that regulations will be formulated to this effect.

Under the new rules being drawn up, non-indigent households that want to avail of water delivery from the mayor's office will be assessed a fee.

Hofschneider refused to disclose the amount that will be charged, pending final approval of regulations. He assured that it will be reasonable but will be a bit higher than what the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. charges its water consumers. The municipality will use the fees for the fuel cost and maintenance of the delivery equipment.

According to Hofschneider, once the regulations take effect, free water assistance will only be available to low-income Saipan residents. They will go through the same application process at the mayor's office.

Hofschneider disclosed that the office delivers about 10,000 gallons of free water a week. To cite an example, just two weeks ago, the municipality received six applications for free water assistance.

He said they're seeing a slight decrease in the number of water assistance requests lately but he is convinced that the regulation is a "sound policy decision" that would assist both the municipality and the utilities corporation in this time of financial hardship.

Saipan Tribune learned that the municipality gets free water from CUC to help those in need in the community. However, the municipality spends fuel, maintenance of the delivery truck, personnel, and other related expenditures for this free service. Most of the requesters, he added, are individuals who are not connected to CUC or those whose accounts have been terminated due to unsettled bills.

Hofschneider said that the proposed regulation is supported by CUC, which believes that the initiative will encourage customers to hook up with the CUC grid as it will be cheaper to get water if directly connected to CUC pumps. Hofschneider said this approach also helps protect the utilities corporation.

MONETH G. DEPOSA
Saipan Mayor's Office special adviser Henry Hofschneider shows the draft regulation that will stop the free water service delivery to non-indigents on Saipan to take effect in the new fiscal year. For many years, the municipality has been providing free water assistance to low-income individuals and families both indigents and not. A fee higher than what CUC charges its water customers will be assessed for non-indigents who may want to avail the water service delivery.

Fire hits kitchen of Coffee Care

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A fire broke out in the kitchen of the Coffee Care restaurant in Sadog Tasi yesterday morning.

A cook and firefighters prevented the blaze from spreading to other parts of the building. No one was reported hurt in the blaze that lasted minutes.

When the fire occurred at about 10:10am only a cook and a waitress were inside the restaurant.

The cook told *Saipan Tribune* that he was in the kitchen when he suddenly saw thick smoke in the exhaust vent. He said he immediately turned off the exhaust and tried to extinguish the fire.

The cook said he had no idea where the smoke was coming from as he was not even cooking at the time. He ran outside as the smoke became thicker.

The waitress was surprised to see the thick smoke in the kitchen and ran outside, leaving her bag inside.

A staff of Vestcor that owns the building called 911.

A Vestcor maintenance worker said that when he arrived he saw smoke coming out of Coffee Care. He opened the door of the defunct brewery house of Micronesian Brokers adjacent to the restaurant so firefighters could get inside the building.

The maintenance worker said the fire burned a portion of the wooden wall of the former brewery house because the exhaust vent passes through that wall.

He said firefighters immediately responded but it took them awhile to start spraying water.

There was no immediate information on the extent of the damage to the restaurant.

When *Saipan Tribune* left the scene at 11:45am, investigators were still gathering more information.

A certain Mr. Wang reportedly owns Coffee Care.

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Zoning Board
will be held on Thursday, August 9, 2012
at 5:00 PM, Zoning Office, 2nd Floor,
Joeten DanDan Commercial Bldg., Saipan
(Tel: 234-9661 • Fax: 234-9666 e-mail: www.zoning.gov.mp)

A. Preliminary Matters
   1. Call to Order
   2. Roll Call
   3. Adoption of Agenda
   4. Adoption of July 12, 2012 minutes
   5. Public Comments (not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings)
B. Public Hearings
   1. None
C. Communications/ Reports
D. Old Business.
   1. Update on the proposed Saipan Zoning Law of 2012
   2. Update on the Amendment of the Saipan Adult Gambling Machine Business Zoning Law of 2012 (Local Bill)
E. New Business
   1. Office operations report
F. Executive (Closed) Session
G. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting, Adjourn.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact Therese T. Ogumoro, Zoning Administrator, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

Labor, Bridge Project ink MOU on training US workers

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor and The Bridge Project founder Jim T. Arenovski inked yesterday a memorandum of understanding that solidifies their commitment to teach Labor applicants basic work and job search skills so they could land jobs in a tight local market.

Division of Employment Services director Alfred Pangelinan and Arenovski signed the MOU at Labor's office on Capital Hill. Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas concurred with the MOU, while Labor administrative services manager Barbara T. Sablan witnessed the signing.

Under the MOU, the Division of Employment Services will refer registered applicants to The Bridge Project to be trained. Bridge Project Inc. will then provide U.S. eligible workers a foundation of job search skills to increase their chances of being interviewed and hired. Bridge Project will then provide Employment Services a listing of all graduates that have found jobs and are pending for job referral services.

San Nicolas said that Labor and The Bridge Project share the same goal—to maximize the employment opportunities of U.S. eligible workers in the Commonwealth.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Division of Employment Services director Alfred Pangelinan signs a Memorandum of Understanding as Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas, Labor administrative services manager Barbara T. Sablan, and The Bridge Project Inc. director Jim Arenovski look on.

The Bridge Project, which was established in 2011, is a free nine-course "guaranteed job interview program" funded by three grants totaling $97,000 from the Department of the Interior through the CNMI Department of Commerce.

The program is eligible for U.S. workers only. Classes at Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe are limited to 25 people.

Pangelinan said that Arenovski will reserve 15 slots for every session that he is going to hold. "So we will be sending 15 and we will be making sure we will fill that in," Pangelinan said.

"The good part of this MOU is we have a general registrant listing. By sending them over to Bridge Project Inc. then coming back, telling us who graduated and who will be referred is part of the agreement. We are going to help each other, trying to find people jobs after graduation," he said.

Arenovski said the MOU will be instrumental in maximizing the amount of exposure of their program to the public.

"We don't want one seat empty in the class. We want 25 people in the class sitting down. This is a step in the right direction to make sure that we're maximizing the grant dollars that we're getting to teach the folks these job skills," Arenovski said.

Another 10-cent increase in Saipan gas prices

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Saipan motorists have to pay more again every time they buy a gallon of gasoline following Mobil Oil Mariana Islands' 10-cent a gallon price increase on Tuesday night, exactly a week since it raised its prices by 15 cents and barely months after a series of rollbacks.

"A 25-cent increase in gas in just one week is ridiculous yet when they try to drop the prices, it takes a long time," Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) said yesterday.

Torres, chairman of the House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications, has been asking the Office of the Attorney General to monitor Mobil and Shell Marianas' prices, which he describes as "too high."

"The latest increases are very disappointing. They have been earning millions of dollars, and donating lots of money too and I am guessing those donations are for tax breaks," he said.

The pump price of regular unleaded gasoline on Saipan is now $4.759 a gallon, up 10 cents from $4.659 a gallon at Mobil service stations.

Super unleaded gasoline now costs $5.079 a gallon, also up 10 cents from $4.979 a gallon.

Diesel, however, remained unchanged at $5.069 a gallon.

As of yesterday afternoon, Shell Marianas service stations had yet to change prices. Mobil and Shell historically mirror each other's price changes.

The CNMI, especially Rota, has the dubious distinction of having the highest gas prices on American soil. As of yesterday, average regular gas price in the U.S. was $3.506 a gallon.

Oil was little changed near $88 a barrel Wednesday in Asia ahead of weekly U.S. crude inventory figures that give a reading on the state of near-term demand for fuel, the Associated Press reported.

Saipan's gas prices started increasing again on July 17, after a series of gas price reductions totaling 60 to 65 cents since May 8.

A government employee said while work hours will be increased to 72 hours starting next week from the current 64 hours, the eight-hour increase might only go to buy gas for their vehicles.

OIA continues to be sympathetic to CNMI's concerns on FICA taxes

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

U.S. Interior Assistant Secretary Tony Babauta said the Office of Insular Affairs continues to be sympathetic to requests of federal tax exemptions for Filipino and Korean workers with Commonwealth-only worker status, even as half a year had passed since employers started deducting FICA from these employees.

FICA stands for Federal Insurance Contribution Act. FICA taxes cover Social Security and Medicare.

"We continue to be sympathetic and I met, not just my staff, with the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] to kind of give them a picture of the CNMI, to try to express to them the concerns of the businesses here," Babauta told *Saipan Tribune*.

Babauta said this request from the CNMI is "under active consideration" by IRS.

He said there is still no telling whether a six-month-old lawsuit by the CNMI government against IRS over FICA will have an impact on IRS's "active consideration" of the CNMI's concerns.

"I'm not sure how that affects their consideration of the issue or if the presence of the case itself prevents them from taking any administrative action…but I do know that they have been working on it for a while since we have talked to them and they have received the letters and everything else from the CNMI," Babauta added.

The Fitial administration, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, and many of the affected Filipino and Korean workers are opposed to lifting the exemption from Social Security and Medicare taxes among Filipino and Korean workers with CW status.

Some workers are worried that after 2014 or when their contract ends and they are sent home to their country of origin, they won't see a single cent of the FICA taxes they paid to the U.S. government.

For a worker earning the CNMI's minimum wage of $5.05 an hour, the monthly FICA tax deduction will be over $45 a month. Employee's FICA contribution is 5.65 percent of their salary.

This deduction consists of 4.2 percent for Social Security, and 1.45 percent for Medicare. This is also on top of the CNMI taxes that foreign workers pay.

Senate EAGI panel yet to receive appointees to DPS, DPL, DPW

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations confirmed yesterday that it has not received from the governor permanent appointments for secretaries for the departments of Public Lands and Public Works as well as commissioner of Public Safety, even as three to four months had passed since individuals were named to fill the posts in acting capacities.

» Up to 4 months since posts were filled temporarily

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian), EAGI Committee chair, said the panel would have promptly acted on these appointments had they received the names of appointees.

"I could confirm that we have not received any appointees to these positions. It's been months since these positions were not filled by permanent secretaries," he said.

Acting governor Eloy S. Inos said on Tuesday that he's reviewing whether the temporary appointments to these posts have already exceeded the 90-day limit, and to ensure that the actions taken by these acting secretaries and acting commissioner remain legal and binding.

These offices separately confirmed yesterday that Pedro I. Itibus remains as acting DPL secretary since April 2; Vicente B. Castro as acting DPW secretary since April; and Ambrosio Ogumoro as acting DPS since March 26.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial have not named any permanent appointees to these positions nor named new temporary appointees so as not to exceed the 90-day period, which is prohibited under the law.

Fitial won't be back until late this week or this weekend, and as of late yesterday afternoon, Inos had yet to make a decision whether to name new appointees to these posts.

Fitial fired Itibus and Castro's predecessors over politics, specifically for not following him back to the Republican Party, from the Covenant Party, whose titular head is now Inos.

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FOR FAILING TO POST $62,034 BOND

Marine sports operators still can't access Managaha

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Marine sports operators are still unable to access Managaha Island because they have yet to post the $62,034 bond as ordered by the court.

Russell H. Lorfing, one of the lawyers for the marine sports operators, said they filed yesterday a motion to ask the court to either remove the bond or only require a nominal amount, which according to him are both supported by the law.

He pointed out that operators continue to suffer despite Superior Court associate judge Joseph N. Camacho's "generous order" granting the preliminary injunction because the bond being asked is too prohibitive.

F. Matthew Smith, Lorfing's co-counsel, said that Camacho should amend his order given the urgency of the matter, the irreparable harm already being suffered by their clients, the likelihood of success on the merits, and the general lack of financial means.

In his July 19, 2012, order, Camacho granted the marine sports operators' request to maintain the status quo on Managaha access until their lawsuit against the Department of Public Lands is decided on its merits.

Camacho, however, ordered the marine sports operators—Island Marine Sports Inc., Aquatic Marine Co. Inc. doing business as Amigo Aquatic Sports, Automarine Inc., Seahorse Inc., and BSEA Inc.—to post the $62,034 bond.

Camacho said the preliminary injunction shall take effect once the bond is remitted to the court.

In their motion to modify the bond requirement, Smith said that Camacho "erroneously required the bond where none is required." Even if the court were to find that a bond is necessary, Smith said the court has discretion to require only a nominal bond.

He pointed out that Camacho's order makes clear that the only enjoined party is DPL. "Nowhere in the court's order is Tasi Tours enjoined or restrained from performing a single act," he added.

Smith said that while Camacho acknowledges that Tasi Tours has proven it might potentially suffer harm, mere harm is not the standard under the Rules of Civil Procedure. Citing a previous court ruling, Smith said Rule 65(c) does not cover potential harm of a third party intervenor.

He said that since the court cannot consider the harm to Tasi Tours since it is only an intervenor in the case, a bond is proper only upon showing that DPL would suffer some harm.

During the two-day hearing on the preliminary injunction, the court heard no testimony nor was any evidence submitted that indicated DPL would suffer harm, Smith said.

"What the court did hear, however, was that DPL was indemnified by Tasi Tours," he said.

Smith said that tourism and the marine sports industry suffer every day that passes without access to Managaha.

"The purpose of an injunction is to prevent irreparable harm and while the court acknowledges that such harm exists, plaintiffs are at an impasse," he said.

The lawyer said the court can alleviate this harm and act to ensure that the spirit and intent of the court order be enforced by simply removing the bond requirement.

COMPETITION

From Page 1

her first time to compete at the national level and also her first time to win.

Her father, Daniel Huh, told *Saipan Tribune* that the upcoming trip of his daughter to the White House is a great honor and unique experience that Esther will forever cherish. Esther is the only child of Daniel and Jenny Huh.

According to Jennifer Gaonach, from the Healthy Lunchtime Challenge, Huh's recipe won her a trip to Washington D.C. on Aug. 19 and 20 where she will join winners from other states at a Kids' State Dinner with the first lady.

In Gaonach's message to Esther, which was received yesterday, she said: "We are thrilled to announce that your recipe was selected as the Healthy Lunchtime Challenge winner from the Northern Mariana Islands. Congratulations! As you know, we received more than 1,200 recipes from across the U.S. and we loved reading through the stories and sampling all the delicious lunches."

Gaonach described Huh's recipe as "particularly impressive, as it was creative, tasted great, and most importantly, healthy."

Huh is expected to soon receive a packet that will contain details of the Kids' State Dinner event.

Based on the Healthy Lunchtime Challenge website, winners were selected from over 1,200 delicious entries that were evaluated at the D.C. Central Kitchen by a panel of judges that included White House assistant chef Sam Kass; chef José Andrés; Marshall and Alex Reid, authors of *Portion Size Me*; *Epicurious* editor-in-chief Tanya Steel; and representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education.

Entries were judged based on the following criteria: 50 percent for the nutritional value of the recipe; 25 percent for perceived taste; 15 percent for creativity and originality; 5 percent for affordability; and 5 percent for the story behind the recipe.

TAX

From Page 1

Inos said the administration's plan is to increase the hotel occupancy tax by 5 percent—or from 10 percent to 15 percent—starting in April 2013.

HANMI chair Nick Nishikawa said yesterday that the hotel association is proposing a 3-percent increase in hotel occupancy tax by January 2013, and gradually increase to 5 percent by January 2014.

"HANMI and the government agreed to just increase the hotel occupancy tax instead of collecting the $15 fee. But right now we have different rates. We will be waiting for a final decision from the government," Nishikawa told *Saipan Tribune*.

Nishikawa said some hotels tried to collect $15 but this either didn't sit well with tourists or the hotel themselves didn't want to inconvenience their guests.

"Some hotels suggested increasing the hotel occupancy tax, which from the accounting point of view, is easier. We are in the service industry so we don't want to create trouble for our guests. So we started talking with the government," he said.

Both Inos and Nishikawa conceded that there were confusions and concerns on how to collect the $15 fee, the type of receipt to be issued, as well as a lack of advanced notification to visitors that such a new fee is imposed on hotel/motel transient occupants. These were not included, for example, in hotel or travel agencies' promotional materials or brochures.

"HANMI fully understands the need to fund MVA [Marianas Visitors Authority] to promote the CNMI but there were concerns about that $15 fee," Nishikawa said.

Inos said the new fee implementation has been pushed back a few times—initially in January, then April, then July, and now for next year.

"The hotel association and some of the travel agencies are now recommending, because of the time that has elapsed, a change in schedule and structure. All of these scheduling [changes] now have finally caught up with us. For a change like this where the passengers have to ultimately pay for it, those sales brochures and guides and so forth would have to include this in the information packets so that there's no misrepresentation, deliberate or not, and that the packages accurately reflect the expectations of tourists," Inos said in an interview.

To effectuate the tax increase, Inos said the Legislature has to first amend both the new $15 tourism/environmental law and the hotel occupancy tax law.

"It's a simple amendment to the law," Inos added.

As of yesterday afternoon, the House leadership has yet to receive draft legislation from the administration.

Inos said increasing the hotel occupancy tax and imposing a flat $15 fee will collect about the same amount. The money raised will be used strictly for tourism promotion and will not go into the general fund. From the $15 fee, the government projected a collection of some $6 million to help tourism and environmental programs.

"Increasing the hotel occupancy tax is simpler. The structure is already there. They're already paying 10 percent, all you got to do is increase it," he said.

House Speaker Eli Cabrera's (R-Saipan) bill became Public Law 17-75 only in June. This was the first major revenue-generating bill that became law in the 17th Legislature. Moreover, this only amends two previous versions that were met with concerns by federal and local agencies.

Under the new law, a $15 fee is collected from transients who pay for lodging in a room of a hotel, lodging house, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, rooming house, condominium, or similar facility in the CNMI. The fee is supposed to be assessed one time for each visit or trip to the CNMI.

Funds derived from the $15 fee will be deposited into a revolving fund administered by the Department of Finance and remitted to MVA. These funds will then be used to build, equip, improve, and maintain projects, agencies, and facilities promoting recreation and tourism.

The two previous pieces of legislation charged a $15 travel fee among tourists from non-U.S. destinations but these were found to be non-compliant with federal laws. The two previous laws required the airlines to collect the fees.

The previous bills also intended to provide incentives to travel agencies that bring in more tourists from Asian countries to the CNMI and charge passengers from these non-U.S. destinations a $15 travel promotion fee.

INVESTOR

From Page 1

Other sources said the administration may favor a Chicago-based company, and not FIC.

The governor won't be back until later this week. The administration said yesterday that this was the first time it became aware of FIC's letter to CNMI officials.

Paul Slater, chairman and chief executive officer of FIC, wrote to CNMI officials on Tuesday, expressing his disappointment and surprise with what transpired last week in Washington, D.C.

That meeting was attended by Fitial, his counsel Jim Stump, Pula, OIA's Keith Aughenbaugh, and Weaver.

"In the meeting of last week at the OIA, representations were made that the CNMI government didn't understand the MOU [memorandum of understanding] and could not agree to something they did not understand," Slater said.

He said FIC is confused by this position since 1) The MOU has been in CNMI/Commonwealth Ports Authority's hands since March and no objections or questions were brought forward; and 2) The proposed MOU was discussed in the CNMI/Tinian/CPA meetings of June 22 and 23, and agreed to on June 23 by Stump.

Slater said that CPA offered its support for the undertaking but that it lacked the resources to repair the Tinian Harbor.

"FIC seeks clear guidance on CNMI/Tinian/CPA's desires for the way ahead. FIC felt this way ahead was clearly defined as a consequence of the June meetings on Saipan and Tinian, and was disappointed and surprised to be told in last week's meetings that CNMI had questions and reservations regarding the proposal, but intended to issue an RFP for the Tinian harbor repairs and proceed with the work without any agreement with FIC to manage the project or have an operator to run the ship recycling business," Slater said.

Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), when asked for comment, said all parties need to come to the table once again, given the confusion and shifting positions others may have on the issue.

"The Tinian leadership would like to have that meeting as soon as possible. I believe that's the best thing to do. My understanding was, based on meeting by all parties involved just last month, that the government is entering into an agreement with FIC, unless there's something that already transpired that we can no longer undo," Hofschneider told *Saipan Tribune*.

Slater said FIC began working on this ship recycling project in 2010, visiting Guam and then Saipan and Tinian in 2011.

"We met several times with the U.S. Maritime Administration in Washington and succeeded in getting written clarification from the Maritime Administrator David Matsuda in April 2011, that the islands of the CNMI were legislatively approved locations for ship recycling as part of Public Law 110-417-Oct.14, 2008," he said.

Slater said FIC fully advised the CPA executive director of these facts in response to his March 21, 2011, letter.

"We met with the Office of Insular Affairs in Washington in Feb[ruary] 2012 and discussed funding for the project, having sent them a White Paper fully describing it. We were given to understand that funding for the harbor repairs could be available and we relayed these facts to Gov. Fitial at a meeting during his visit to Washington for the US Governor's conference at the end of Feb[ruary] 2012," he added.

He also attached an MOU that he said Fitial suggested that FIC submit to the CNMI and CPA after his and Weaver's meeting with the governor in Washington, D.C. in February 2012.

The MOU was submitted to CPA in March, and CPA acknowledged receipt and confirmed that it would be forwarded to the CPA executive director and CPA board.

On April 9, Slater said, FIC was advised that the CPA board had reviewed the MOU and referred it to their legal counsel to draft a response. On April 16, CPA executive director Edward M. Deleon Guerrero wrote a letter, posing no objections to the proposed arrangement and encouraged FIC to pursue business opportunities on Tinian, said Slater.

However, CPA said it has no resources to undertake the repairs to Tinian Harbor that would be prerequisite to introducing a ship recycling industry to the CNMI.

This was discussed in a meeting with Fitial, CPA, Pula, and Tinian leaders on Saipan last month. Slater said Pula confirmed at the time that funding for the harbor repairs was available.

"As a result of these meetings FIC advised the Indian operators that the funding for the harbor repairs was now available and the MOU between FIC and the CNMI/CPA had been agreed. The Indians stated that when the final MOU was signed they would sign an MOU with FIC in the form that they had agreed, and plan on visiting Tinian very soon to finalize all the operating issues," he added.

Don Farrell from the Tinian Mayor's Office said when Tinian officials left the Senate chamber in June, "we were all under the impression that Governor Fitial was in full support of the project."

FRIEDLE

From Page 1

sonal items, including his watch and wallet, were left inside the car.

Anyone with information can call DPS at 911 or contact the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272 should you want to remain anonymous or use our website at www.nmicrimestoppers.net.

Saipan Tribune archives show that Friedle used to be an executive chef for the Aqua Resort Club. ***(Crime Stoppers)***

Number of fall applicants for NMI scholarship awards drop

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The number of applications the NMI Scholarship Office received for the fall 2012 semester dropped by 5 percent compared to last year's, according to administrator Jackie Che yesterday.

The number of new scholarship applicants who will go to the Northern Marianas College and those who will study overseas also showed a decline, based on agency records.

The scholarship office received only 948 applications for the fall 2012 semester, a decline when compared to the 1,055 applications submitted for the fall 2011 semester.

In the same period last year, NMC's new applicants totaled 291, of which 347 were ongoing and 31 were returning students. This fall 2012, new applicants who go to NMC totaled just 225, composed of 282 ongoing students and 77 returning students.

For off-island applications last year, Che said that there were a total of 122 new students; 241 ongoing and 23 returning students. This fall 2012, off-island new students totaled 86; ongoing 221; and returning students, 53.

Che said the number of new applicants to NMC dropped by 12.8 percent while those applying overseas decreased by 17.3 percent—from 122 in fall 2011 to 86 in fall 2012.

"Fluctuations from year to year are unknowable, and there are many possible causes. We have seen a phenomenal growth in applications over the past decade but it is not surprising that the number of applications is lower than last year," Che told *Saipan Tribune*.

One reason, she said, is the recent changes to the regulations governing the Educational Assistance Program, which means that application patterns this year may be different from previous years.

Beginning this school year 2013, a new applicant can only be eligible for financial assistance if he or she adheres to certain regulations.

Based on Section V of the new regulation, all new applicants beginning fall 2012 will only receive financial assistance if they are either enrolled at NMC or if they are enrolled at another accredited institution and have already obtained an associate degree. However, this requirement will be waived if the applicant resides in the CNMI at the time of application; if the applicant's qualification for the residency requirement is based on residence on an island other than Saipan; and if the island on which the applicant resides does not have an NMC satellite campus that offers associate degree programs, either in person or online.

"The drop in new applications for off-island studies is due to the serious effort put in by the Scholarship Advisory Board, NMC outreach efforts, and many others in making sure that each student and their parents know the benefits of attending the local college first before transferring to a four-year program," explained Che, adding that close to 20 percent of this year's ongoing and returning overseas EAP applicants are enrolled in community colleges in Guam and across the nation, taking up courses that are already offered at NMC.

Although the reasons she cited may not be the best indicator for the drop in applications this year, Che said "it is clearly a positive indicator for students transitioning to a more direct, affordable, and practical route."

She said the lower number of applications does not necessarily mean a drop in the number of students pursuing higher education. She believes that another important factor is the perception of being denied a scholarship due to grades and the uncertainty of funding levels.

"Most of us assume that when there is an economic downturn, the numbers will go up and we saw that in fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011. But as our applicants learned about the financial realities of college debt, the required service obligation, and scholarship disbursement delays, our numbers have gone back down," added Che.

StayWell to issue 2011 rebates to NMI government employees

StayWell Insurance is rebating $3.8 million to employer groups in Guam and $292,000 to CNMI government employees for policy year 2011.

This is nothing new to StayWell—it has refunded approximately $35 million in refunds to members since 1982.

"The refunds and rebates are a direct result of StayWell's quality initiatives, excellent case management, and members being proactive about their health and wellness," said StayWell president, Francis E. Santos.

StayWell's unmatched experience and its ability to manage benefits result in a win-win situation for the employers and employees.

StayWell group segments include large groups, small groups, and individuals. Group segments with 1,000 or more lives are determined to be "credible." The StayWell Guam large and small group segments along with the StayWell CNMI individual (CNMI government) qualified as credible groups.

Under the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies with credible group segments must comply with the Medical Loss Ratio regulation as codified in *45 CFR Part 158*. The figure below illustrates the MLR formula under ACA:

$$\text{ACA MLR} = \frac{\text{Health Care Claims + Quality Improvement Expenses}}{\text{Premiums- Taxes\& Licensing \& Regulatory Fees}}$$

For Guam, StayWell will distribute the large and small groups a rebate check before Aug. 1, 2012. Each company will then be responsible to determine the distribution method of the rebates. The company may reduce the premiums for the upcoming year or distribute the rebates to the StayWell subscribers.

The StayWell CNMI government subscribers will also be receiving rebates. The checks will be distributed to each policyholder at the StayWell Saipan office today, July 26, and Friday, July 27.

StayWell Insurance was founded in 1982 and primarily offered health insurance to the Government of Guam. It later expanded to offering health insurance to private businesses in Guam and the CNMI. After 25 years of service, StayWell has established offering other lines of insurance to include both Home and Auto Insurance.

For more information about StayWell Guam rebates, contact (671) 477-5091 and for more information about StayWell Saipan rebates, contact (670) 323-4260/61. *(StayWell)*

$870K for Guam coastal management

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has awarded $870,000 in federal financial assistance to the Guam Department of Administration.

This formula grant will be used to help the department administer the Guam Coastal Management Program, which guides the use, protection and development of land and ocean resources within Guam's coastal zone.

The grant also will support new initiatives such as the development of legislation to finance natural resource management on Guam; planning for unique "Village Centers" in north and central Guam; and enhanced public access to coastal and marine resources. The award funds a large range of outreach projects, community engagement and volunteer programs to support responsible resource use, conservation actions in local watersheds and sustainable development of the island.

"I appreciate NOAA's continued support of Guam's efforts to protect our coastal areas, and I look forward to seeing these funds benefit our island," said Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU) yesterday ***(PR)***

STAY WELL® insurance

CNMI GOVT MEMBERS

You are receiving a rebate for 2011!

StayWell is the only health insurance company in the region that provides refunds to its qualified members each year. StayWell is additionally rebating a total of $291,586 to CNMI Government employees as a result of the Affordable Care Act's Medical Loss Ratio requirement.

2011 REBATE CHECK DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE

WHO: CNMI Gov't employees who had StayWell Insurance in 2011 for at least one pay period

WHERE: StayWell Saipan Office, Lower Capitol Hill (entrance to FlameTree Apartments)

WHEN: **Thursday, July 26, 2012, 8am – 6pm**

CNMI Government employees who were insured with StayWell in 2011 at the:

- Public School System (PSS)
- Northern Marianas College (NMC)
- Northern Marianas Retirement Fund (NMRF)
- Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA)
- Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC)
- Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA)
- Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA)
- Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC)
- Micronesian Legal Services (MLS)
- Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC)

Friday, July 27th, 2012, 8am – 6pm

All other CNMI Government employees who were insured with StayWell in 2011.

Rebates will be prorated based upon how many pay periods a member was covered in 2011. The policy subscriber will be the only one allowed to pickup the check. All checks not picked up will be mailed on Monday, July 30, 2012.

For more information, please call StayWell Saipan at 323-4260/61/62

Swimming pool, wind turbine projects for SSHS on hold

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Two projects for Saipan Southern High School remain on hold following disclosures that funding for one has been reprogrammed while some requirements have yet been fulfilled for the other, according to Board of Education officials.

Board member Lucy Blanco-Maratita disclosed at a recent meeting that the school's swimming pool project is still in the books of the Northern Marianas Housing Corp., which handles the community development block grant where the funding is supposed to come from. At the moment, no funding has been committed for the project yet.

Saipan Tribune learned that the construction of the first-ever swimming pool project of the Public School System was cancelled in school year 2011-2012 after the Fitial administration reprogrammed some $200,000 for the project to pay for the central government's debt with the Commonwealth Utilities Corp in 2010. The Education Board approved the project in September 2009.

Board chair Marylou Ada told the board that the project is still on and is only awaiting the allocation of new CDBG funds from the housing corporation.

According to Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan, housing corporation officials have told them that many of the agency's projects are delayed. No commitment was made on which program year funds will be tapped for the pool project.

Besides the pool, the wind turbine project at SSHS has also yet to be completed pending the completion of some federal requirements. Sablan told the board that PSS will be meeting with the project contractor this month to obtain updates on the project.

The installation of wind turbines at SSHS is part of the PSS green energy project, which was temporarily put on hold last year due to failure to secure the necessary permits to build the wind turbines inside the campus.

The CNMI Division of Energy received $6.5 million from the U.S. Department of Energy last year for renewable energy projects, $2.4 million of which was given to PSS for the installation of wind turbines and solar panels in 11 schools.

In March 2010, SSHS broke ground for the construction of six 95-feet wind turbines and 95 solar panels on campus.

Once the project is completed, SSHS is expected to produce its own electricity, as much as 165 kilowatts, enough to power the entire campus, and save up to $200,000 in annual utility payments.

The green energy project was initially targeted to be completed within 2011.

New student rep planning to adopt 'Know the Truth' program in CNMI

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Newly appointed public schools student representative Audrey Joy Ada has bared plans to adopt an international program that will address use of drugs and alcohol as well as bullying among Commonwealth students.

Ada wants to bring to the CNMI the "Know the Truth" program, which was initiated in Minnesota. It is designed to educate students on addictions and the consequences of their choices as well as to help them overcome everyday struggles.

According to the program's website, it offers large-group, multi-media presentations that challenge students through the stories of others "who have walked the dark alleys of addiction."

"During the past year, 'Know the Truth' has worked with over 130 high schools within the United States. I'm hoping to bring them to the CNMI to speak with our students. Last school year, another program titled 'Teen Truth Live' came to the CNMI and spoke about drug and alcohol use. This program impacted my friends and it was highly effective for my peers," she told *Saipan Tribune.*

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Newly appointed public schools student representative Audrey Joy Ada.

Ada believes that once these programs are established in the CNMI, "we can begin to self-run them with our schools' student councils or youth advisory panel members."

Ada also vowed to help address teen pregnancy by educating her peers and by pushing for the creation of nursing stations in public high school to help affected students.

"I'm hoping to be able to establish a nursing station in each of the high schools. At Marianas High School, our nurse's office provides us with free birth control [information flyers] and condoms, and I have received so much requests from other students that they want the same in their high schools. Some parents may not agree with this, but my peers find it highly effective in preventing teen pregnancy," she said, adding that she will also endorse the establishment of "sex education" courses in secondary schools to better inform students about sexually transmitted diseases.

Ada said she will continue to look into other effective programs that can be adopted in the CNMI.

Ada was appointed to the Board of Education last Friday. She is a non-voting board member representing public school students.

Navy mourns death of Guam sailor

AGAT, Guam—On July23 Information Technician 2nd Class Anna Sterling stationed at Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station Guam was involved in a fatal motorcycle accident while driving through Agat, Guam.

Police and emergency services were on-scene immediately after the accident and she was transported to U.S. Naval Hospital Guam where she was pronounced dead by medical personnel.

Sterling had been stationed in Guam since July 2009 when she reported to USS *Frank Cable* and had just recently transferred to NCTS Guam in May 2012.

"Information Technician 2nd Class Sterling was one of the most well-liked sailors at our command. In the time that we knew her, she was never seen with anything less than an optimistic approach and a smile to everything that she did," said NCTS Guam executive officer Lt. Cmdr. Randal Fuller. "Her loss is devastating to us here at NCTS Guam. She will be sorely missed."

Sterling is originally from Bellevue, WA, and enlisted in the Navy on Aug. 1, 2000. Her tours included NCTS Keflavik, Iceland, USS *Abraham Lincoln*, and Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Pacific before transferring to Guam. She was awarded The Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals. ***(PR)***

Ierome resigns as CJPA executive director

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Jerome Ierome has resigned as executive director of the Criminal Justice Planning Agency.

Ierome

In a chance interview yesterday at the Judicial Complex, Ierome confirmed that he had indeed submitted his resignation letter to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial on July 2 and that his resignation will take effect by next week, Aug. 2.

Ierome said he and his family will relocate to American Samoa so he could take care of his father.

"After the passing of my mother two months ago, I decided that it's time for me to go and take care of my dad," said Ierome, who is a native of Tula, a remote eastern district of American Samoa.

Ierome has been living on Saipan for 21 years. He served as CJPA executive director for five years and 10 months. He used to teach at Saipan Southern High School, Marianas High School, and the Northern Marianas College.

"I'm very sad that I have to leave. I made Saipan a home. This is basically a home for me. My wife is from here. I'm sad to leave but I have to make a very tough decision," Ierome said.

He said they will return to the island for a visit every now and then.

Ierome hopes that the people they served and worked with in CJPA programs are happy with what they've done during his term.

CJPA is the designated office for the CNMI to receive federal funding under the U.S. Department of Justice. It was established in 1980 under the Office of the Governor though an executive order, which created the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Council for the Improvement of the Criminal Justice System.

In 1995, CJPA was moved and placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Safety for the purposes of coordination and administration of resources made available to law enforcement.

In 1998, pursuant to public law, CJPA returned to the Office of the Governor.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy birthday greetings go out to Jack Tomokane, who is celebrating his birthday today, July 26. Even if we are all miles away we are thinking of you on this special day! We love and miss you! Greetings come from Tas, Jo, and the kids from Bamberg, Germany. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

July 26, 2000

NMIRF asked to recover $127K from ex-CPA officials

The Public Auditor is asking the NMI Retirement Fund to recover more than $127,000 worth of retirement benefits improperly made to two former officials of the Commonwealth Ports Authority who were found to have inflated their leave and compensatory time credits to get higher pension. Although a series of hearings conducted by CPA's Personnel Affairs Committee insisted the 2,700 compensatory time claimed by the agency's former security chief had a factual basis, OPA maintained these were excessive and warranted. The Public Auditor has also suggested that the matter be referred to the Attorney General's Office should the NMI Retirement Fund encounter problems in the recovery of the $126,730.06 in retirement benefits improperly paid to the two former CPA officials.

Unused CIP funds eyed for other Saipan projects

Lawmakers have sought to set aside excess funds from completed capital improvement projects on Saipan for other infrastructure plans on the island under a bill recently passed by the House of Representatives. HB 12-122, or the Capital Improvement Project Act of 2000, seeks to establish a special account for the third senatorial district for any and all CIP funds, which will then be used for its future development projects. Offered by Rep. Jesus T. Attao, it will provide reprogramming authority to the governor to shift these unexpended funds for priority projects on Saipan.

July 26, 2001

Senate defies Teno's veto on aviation fuel tax bill

The Marianas Visitors Authority just got the equivalent of an early Christmas gift, courtesy of the Senate. The Upper Chamber flexed its muscles yesterday by overriding the veto on a bill that would set aside 100 percent of the aviation fuel tax for the MVA to fund the improvement of tourism in the Commonwealth. Besides this, House Bill 12-359 would also mandate the creation of two deputy marketing director positions: one for Rota and one for Tinian.

Bill to exempt MVA from bidding requirements filed

In a bid to further strengthen the marketing strategy of the Marianas Visitors Authority in Japan, Sen. Joaquin G. Adriano has filed a bill that would exempt the MVA from the stringent bidding requirements outlined in Commonwealth statutes. According to Adriano, he decided to file the bill after finding out that the present competitive sealed bidding procedures "unduly restricts the MVA's urgent need to procure specialized marketing services in Japan." Senate Bill 12-124 would primarily add a new section to Title 1, Section 7404 of the Commonwealth Code that would exempt the MVA from the bidding preference requirements, as outlined in the Code.

July 26, 2002

BoS objects to status presentation

The Bank of Saipan board of directors has aired objections to the court-approved presentations on the bank's current status next week, raising issues of alleged due process violations against the bank owners. Lawyer David A. Mair, in a motion opposing BoS receiver Randall T. Fennell's ex parte request for presentations, called on the court to vacate its July 22 order which scheduled the BoS reportage for July 29 and 30. The bank counsel, in asserting that the receiver's motion should not have been granted, stated that BoS must be timely informed of factual and legal contentions to be advanced by the receiver's contracted financial consultants prior to the presentations.

CUC to Senate: Just follow MOU

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. is insisting that any bills that may be passed by the Legislature addressing the settlement of its $102 million debt with the Commonwealth Development Authority should be in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement signed between the two parties. With this in mind, CUC acting executive director Bernard P. Villagomez pointed out to Sen. Diego M. Songao that, more than House Bills 13-106 and 13-107, it is Senate Bill 13-59 that actually allows for the waiver of interest to CDA and implicitly supports the negotiated settlement. Songao is chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communication. Senate Bill 13-59, a two-page measure authored by Sen. Ramon Guerrero, a former CUC executive director, approves the waiver of all the accrued interest and penalties owed by CUC to CDA on the utility firm's loans.

NMI's visitor arrivals in May up by 20 percent—MVA

May 2012 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands were up 20 percent compared to May 2011.

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota registered 28,193 visitors in May compared to 23,451 in May 2011. Overall, visitor arrivals are up 12 percent so far this fiscal year to 256,898 visitors.

Arrivals from Japan were 29 percent higher to 9,727 in May, another month of rebound following the East Japan Earthquake of March 2011 and subsequent drop-off in travel from the primary source market. The significant increase in May was thanks to additional flights launched by Asiana Airlines during Golden Week, as well as increased agent promotions and media exposure for Saipan, Tinian, and Rota in the run-up to the anticipated launch of Saipan Air on July 1, which was subsequently cancelled.

Arrivals from Korea posted a fourth month of double-digit increases, up 24 percent to 9,052 visitors. Asiana Airlines re-launched a second weekly service from Busan to Saipan on June 13 which had been suspended since June of last year due to lack of available aircraft. The supply of air seats to the Northern Marianas out of the Korea market is expected to continue to steadily increase this summer due to planned charter flights from Incheon to Saipan during the summer peak season, with eight charters already scheduled from Aug. 1 to 25 using an Asiana Airlines Airbus 321 with 171 seats.

Brand USA, the first federal organization in the United States to market the country to the world as a tourism destination, kicked off activities in Japan and Korea in May with a major television advertising campaign, and is now setting up a Japan and Korea representative office to launch large-scale promotions for the U.S. as a whole. These Brand USA promotions in Japan and Korea will include the NMI under its umbrella, and as a result, the NMI will benefit from ongoing large-scale Brand USA promotions in both Japan & Korea during the coming years. The MVA will participate in the first-ever Brand USA Pavilion at JATA World Travel Fair in September.

Arrivals from China increased 33 percent to 6,685 visitors in May, continuing a steady growth pace this fiscal year compared to last. So far this fiscal year, the Northern Marianas has received 88 percent more visitors from China as the same period last year due to additional flights, which include six total weekly flights from Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Meanwhile, arrivals were also up 33 percent from Russia to 431.

"May 2012 continued to show recovery compared to last year from our primary source markets of Japan and Korea and our secondary market of Russia, all of which had been negatively affected by the East Japan Earthquake of March 2011," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "So far this fiscal year, we have seen double digit growth from Korea, China, and Russia, with arrivals from Japan nearly even to the same period last year. It's a step in the right direction."

Arrivals were also up in May from the Philippines (23 percent to 53) and Other Areas (3 percent to 242). Other markets posted lower arrivals, including Guam (5 percent to 1,317), the United States (46 percent to 649) and Hong Kong (90 percent to 37).

Economic highlights

Japan's Cabinet Office raised its economic assessment for the first time in nine months, from "picking up slowly" to "on the way to recovery at a moderate pace," citing improvements in both domestic consumption and exports. The government continues to focus its efforts on earthquake reconstruction, and together with the Bank of Japan, will persist in battling deflation and an unfavorably strong yen. In May, the yen continued to strengthen to close the month at 78.74 to the US dollar, a high not seen since mid-February.

Online reservation website Expedia.com conducted a survey to determine the trends of two generations in Japan: those just entering the workforce (aged 22-25) and baby boomers (aged 55 and up). All demographics that were satisfied with their incomes listed "travel" as one of their top three uses for disposable income, and women were even more inclined to travel. The most preferred international destinations for men were the mainland USA, followed by Saipan, and in third place, Guam.

The Korean economy is showing signs of delayed improvement compared to the previous month as the growth rate of exports slowed mainly to the European Union. According to Statistics Korea, the monthly average income of Korean households with two people or more reached 4.124 million won in the first quarter advancing 6.9 percent from a year ago. In real terms (adjusted for inflation), it grew 3.8 percent during the same period, marking the fourth straight year-on-year rise.

According to the Korea Tourism Organization, the number of Korean outbound travelers in April was 1,018,645, an increase of 17.4 percent compared to the same month (867,487) in 2011. The total number of Korean outbound travelers from January to April was 4,388,713, up 7.2 percent from the same period (4,095,816) in 2011. ***(MVA)***

FHB posts 5.6 pct. earnings increase in first half of 2011

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—First Hawaiian Bank reported first half net income of $113.2 million, up 5.6 percent over the first half of 2011. Second quarter net income of $56.4 million was up 3.6 percent over the comparable quarter of 2011. Total deposits grew 7.8 percent to a record of $12.6 billion. The announcement was made yesterday by Bob Harrison, First Hawaiian Bank president and chief executive officer.

"First Hawaiian finished the first half of 2012 with solid earnings, good deposit growth and strong asset quality. Gains in the tourism and retail sectors are leading our state's economic recovery. While the recovery has been slow, our construction industry is showing signs of improvement which will play an important role in reducing Hawaii's unemployment rate," said Harrison.

For the six months ended June 30, 2012, First Hawaiian Bank achieved the following:

■ **Total Assets**: were $16.1 billion, up 8.6 percent.

■ **Total Deposits**: were $12.6 billion, an increase of 7.8 percent.

■ **Loans and Leases:** up 4.2 percent to $8.6 billion.

■ **Non-Performing Assets to Total Assets**: remained one of the lowest in the nation at 0.23 percent.

■ **Efficiency Ratio:** was 42.9 percent making First Hawaiian the most productive bank in Hawaii and one of the most efficient in the nation.

During the second quarter, the bank launched a new Priority Business Cash Rewards card offering business customers greater flexibility in managing their purchases.

Also during the year, First Hawaiian was voted the Best Bank in Hawaii by the readers of *Honolulu Magazine*. The bank was also recognized as one of Hawaii's Best Places to Work by *Hawaii Business Magazine* and one of the state's Best Banks by the readers of the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser.*

In the second quarter 2012 Hawaii Business Activity Report released this month, First Hawaiian reported that overall debit and credit card sales transactions for "same store sales" were up by 8.05 percent, continuing a positive growth trend over the last two years with the first half of 2012 posting 9.27 percent gain over the prior year. ***(FHB)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ben Babauta, center, accepts the key from Ben Lizama, second from left, for a brand new 2013 Hyundai Elantra that will be featured as one of the hole-in-one prizes at this years 17th Annual Tournament of Champions. Also in photo are DFS employees Arthur Miron, Marida Pensador, and Boyet Centeno.

Triple J Motors donates 2013 Elantra as hole-in-one prize

To add to the impressive list of prizes already featured at the upcoming 17th Annual Tournament of Champions, Triple J Motors is donating a brand new 2013 Elantra as a hole-in-one prize.

"The Tournament of Champions is the premier golf tournament in the CNMI, and the funds raised from it benefit the entire community," said Triple J Motors general manager Randy Steele. "We are happy to be a part of this important event."

"Triple J Motors' donation will be a great draw for golfers," said Ben Babauta, tournament director. "We are thankful for the company's donation and commitment to the tournament all these years."

The 17th Annual Tournament of Champions will be played at LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort's east and west courses on Aug. 4 and 5. The two-day event is bigger and better than ever with exciting hole-in-one prizes, and the chance to walk away with over thousands of dollars in possible prizes. The TOC tournament fee is $175.

First place winners in the Men's Championship, A, B, C, Senior, and Super Senior Flights will each receive $500 cash, $400 for second, $300 for third, a digital camera to fourth, and $100 DFS gift certificate for fifth place.

The Ladies Low Gross champion will receive $500, $400 for second, and $300 for third place. The Ladies Low Net first through third places will receive a trophy.

Over $300,000 worth of prizes is at stake in the two-day tournament, including hole-in-one prizes worth $50,000 on both the east and west courses courtesy of AON Insurance. Other hole-in-one prizes include two brand new cars from Joeten Motors and Microl Toyota.

Furthermore, Saipan Laolao Golf & Resort is offering one year of free golf as another hole-in-one prize, while Delta Airlines is also contributing business class airfares to the U.S. mainland as yet an additional hole-in-one prize.

Since its inception, TOC has given over $500,000 to the Saipan Beautification Fund, which has gone directly to the improvements of the tree-lined traffic medians that stretch from Garapan to the former Palm Resort Saipan, as well as the revitalization of the Garapan tourist district. In addition, TOC also contributed funds for the Paseo de Marianas, the lighting of the Saipan Beach Pathway, and most recently the beautification of the Port to Park pathway.

"We are proud of our continued commitment to enhance the beauty of Saipan for our tourists and residents." Babauta, said. "It is the generous support of our golfers, sponsors and committee members that make this event possible." ***(PR)***

BOH now accepting grant applications for small businesses

Bank of Hawaii is now accepting applications for the "I Kinometi Para I Kumunidåt I Islå-ta" Small Business Revitalization and Development Grant for projects that will foster small-business development and economic activity within Saipan.

Bank of Hawaii will invest up to $25,000 in grants. Small-business owners are invited to submit applications by Aug. 24. The award is open to small-business owners with a successful track record in operating a business or management experience.

The bank established the grant program to help promote new Saipan businesses and to encourage existing small businesses to expand.

If not already completed, grant awardees are required to complete one of the following before the end of the year:

■ CNMI Small Business Development Center small business training program.

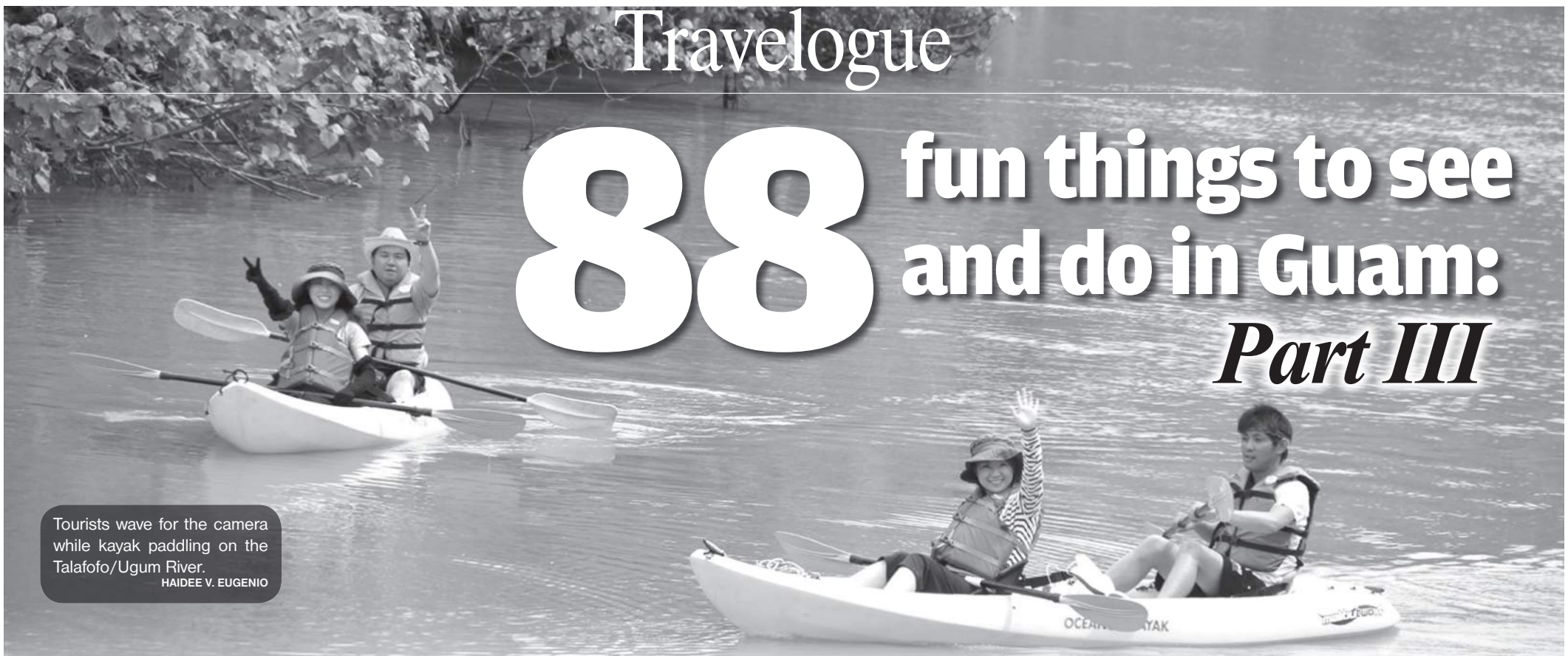
■ Bank of Hawaii Smart Money small business financial education training.

Grant awardees are also expected to report back to the bank on how the grant has made a difference to their business and the community.

Application forms are available at Bank of Hawaii's Garapan and Chalan Kanoa branches or by contacting our Saipan regional manager at (670) 237-2951. Applications should be submitted to: Saipan Regional Manager John Sheather, Bank of Hawaii Bldg. Suite 100, Marina Heights Business Park, Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Saipan, MP 96950. ***(BOH)***

Travelogue

88 fun things to see and do in Guam: *Part III*



Tourists wave for the camera while kayak paddling on the Talafofo/Ugum River.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Third of a five-part series

37 Jungle Riverboat Cruise. If you think you've already explored the whole of Guam, think again, because the only thing you might still be missing is a jungle riverboat cruise that allows you to explore the lush jungle along Talafofo and Ugum Rivers while aboard the Adventure River Cruise.

An island-style floating dock welcomes those who visit the site of an ancient Chamorro village as part of a jungle riverboat cruise in Guam's Talafofo and Ugum Rivers.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

The scenic tour, which I highly recommend to anyone visiting or living in Guam, includes a visit to an ancient Chamorro village with latte stones, grinding stones, caves, and beautiful flora and fauna.

There are two cruises daily. One is at 9am and the other, at 1:30pm. My friend and I took the Saturday morning cruise that, only about two months ago, was unknown to me despite years of visiting Guam.

Waiting for the tourist bus carrying fellow cruise passengers to arrive gave us a chance to take in the crispness of that fine Saturday morning and the view of the muddy river and the rich vegetation. It rained the previous night and the days before that, hence the river's color that morning.

Flash that smile when the boat captain/tour guide snaps a photo of you and your group before the start of the cruise because at the end of the fun and smooth cruise you will get a souvenir photo for just $15. Cool off with free ice cream served onboard.

We were the first ones to arrive so we got to pick the front seats. Later, we realized, we should have taken the boat captain's advice to choose the "right" side in front.

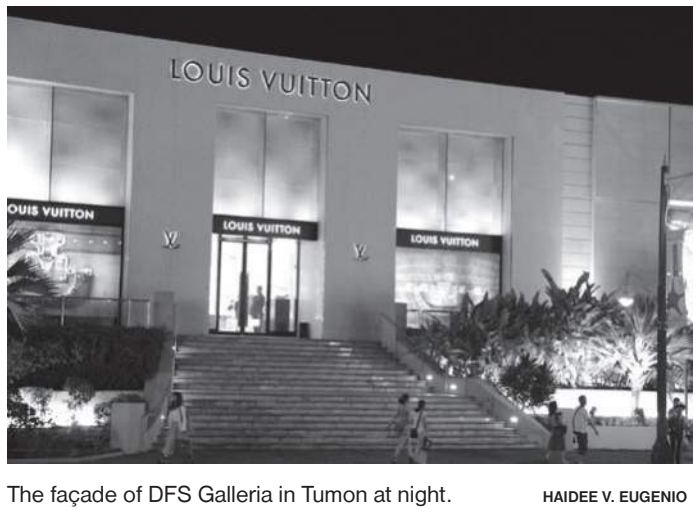
As the riverboat moved upstream, we were treated to a sensory overload—clear skies, dense jungle along the riverbanks, tropical fish in the river, and muddy water that nevertheless sustains the rich wildlife of plants and animals. The riverboat also had to maneuver through bamboo shafts that found their way to the water.

We stopped a few times to feed different fish types and "Guam chickens!" which the tour guides excitedly introduced to passengers. Even the coconut crabs seemed to be appear right on cue by the riverbank to be fed. At one point during the cruise, the guide pointed to a "crocodile" only to realize seconds later that he was just teasing u. I was just about to stay away from the edge of the riverboat for fear of being grabbed or bitten by a real one.

Tourists of all ages on the grounds of an ancient Chamorro village.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Minutes later, the riverboat turned back and dropped off the passengers at the site of an ancient Chamorro village that we earlier passed. The short hike took us to a latte stone field. This is one of the best spots to have your photo taken on this tour because latte stones are found only in Guam and the CNMI and nowhere else in the world. Latte stones are pillars on which ancient Chamorro houses were constructed as early as 500 A.D.

One of the guides walked us to the caves that served as dwellings of ancient people. He also pointed to snake skins hanging by rock formations. We passed by a group of residents weaving coconut palm leaves, on our way to a local hut where a young man demonstrated how ancient Chamorros built fire from sticks, to the amazement of the tourists. Another man showed us how to weave baskets, fans, hats, bags, and head leis using coconut palm fronds. Other fun activities for tourists ensued. Tourists also got to see a large iguana, a giant coconut crab, and a brown tree snake in cages.



The façade of DFS Galleria in Tumon at night.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Guam's jungle riverboat cruise reminded me of a Sigatoka River Safari in the South Pacific nation of Fiji in November 2010, as well as childhood summer vacations that allowed us to swim or wade in rivers and water irrigation systems (looking back, frolicking in water dams wasn't a good and safe idea).

The cruise took some two hours, and was surprisingly fun and educational for passengers of all ages. It was well worth the time to see parts of Guam you would otherwise not get to see.

For reservations, call (671) 789 3342/789 3413, or email jrbc@guam.net or jfq@guam.net.

And should you decide to take this tour, don't forget to bring your camera.

38 Kayaking the Talofofo River. A different group of tourists was kayaking the Talafofo River minutes after the cruise passengers disembarked from the riverboat to visit the site of an ancient Chamorro village. Though we didn't try this activity, it sure looks fun for those who are fond of kayak paddling in the seclusion and serenity of Guam's rivers and dense jungle.

39 Walking along Tumon Bay shores at night. Guam's favorite coastal playground is also fun to walk at night, as hotels, beachside bars, and restaurants not only illuminate Tumon Bay's shore but also fill the air with island music, laughter, and chatter.

Listening to the relaxing sound of waves crashing on the beach, reading the writings in the sand left by lovers and friends, passing by a man net fishing while his wife and daughter patiently wait for him, or just living the moment might just be what you need after a long day.

40 Globe. It's not true that only the really young ones go to the largest and only New York-style nightclub complex in Guam. At Globe, you get to enjoy a hot time on the dance floor and the different bars, each with a different theme. It is located at the SandCastle Entertainment Center in Tumon and boasts of having the most contemporary club atmosphere—a nice sound system and light show—with pockets of soft areas for club goers to relax. Time to get those party shoes on.

41 Gef Pa'go Cultural Village. This village is located on the southeast coast of the island along the coast of Inarajan Bay and showcases Chamorro cul-

Continued on Next Page

A young tourist checks out the woven fans, baskets and head leis made of coconut palm leaves.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

A young man demonstrates how ancient Chamorros built fire from sticks.
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From Page 8

ture and traditions on display, craft shops, and performances. The cultural village is made up of all natural materials to mimic the Chamorro shelters of the past and is open daily for crafts and folkways demonstrations.

You can see the making of coconut candy and sea salt, as well as weaving of coconut fronds that you could buy as gifts. The cultural village employs several master weavers who demonstrate the art to students, tourists, and interested residents.

42 Pope John Paul II Monument. This bronze statue of Pope John Paul II was built in central Hagatna in commemoration of his 1981 visit to Guam, the first papal visit to the island since Christianity was introduced by the Jesuits in the 17th century.

The statue stands on the site where Pope John Paul II held Mass in February 1981. It is said that the statue rotates one full revolution every 12 hours but the motor is no longer working. It is located in the middle of Chalan Santo Papa Juan Pablo Dos Street, named in his honor, between Plaza de Espana and Skinner Plaza.

As the jungle riverboat moves upstream, travel back in time and marvel at the lush jungle, the riverbank, tropical fish, and muddy water that nevertheless sustains the rich wildlife of plants and animals around.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

The author poses with a latte stone field in the background, as part of a highly recommended jungle riverboat cruise. Latte stones are pillars on which ancient Chamorro houses were constructed as early as 500 A.D.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A caged iguana looks back at tourists.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Liking anything you see? These are samples of ifilwood or ifit wood products for sale on roadsides.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

43 Car shows. For an island, Guam seems to have more than enough roads and dirt roads to accommodate just about every kind of vehicle there is. That is why it's not surprising to see auto shows every now and then.

44 Ritidian Beach. One of Guam's most pristine sandy beaches, Ritidian Beach is worth the long drive. It offers powder white sand and miles of crystal clear water that erase all your worries and enamor you to the beauty of the spot.

Ritidian Point, located at the northernmost tip of Guam, is a national wildlife refuge. One of the few signs that the land is a former coconut plantation is a path through a coconut-tree jungle.

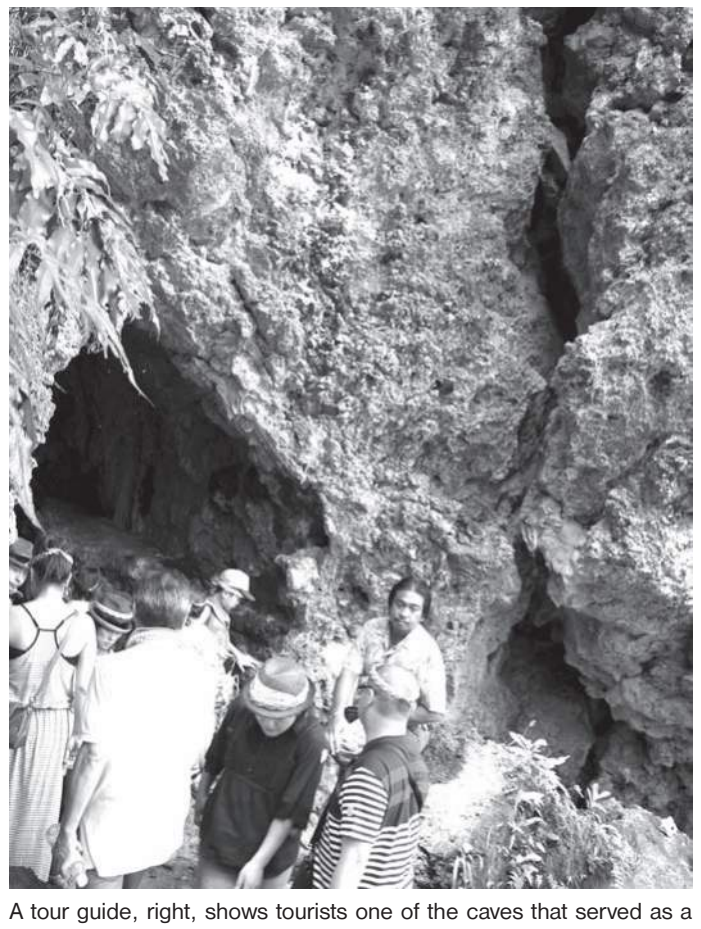
Most of the area in this portion of the island is uninhabited and the only reason locals and tourists travel here is to spend a relaxing day at the beach, especially on weekdays when there's little to no people around. On weekends, Ritidian Beach fills with families and picnickers.

Because it is a long stretch of beach, it isn't hard to find your own secluded spot. If the sun is too much for you, reading a book by a tree's shade might just do the trick. I remember reading the first few chapters of *Angela's Ashes*, a 1996 memoir by the Irish-American author Frank McCourt that won him the Pulitzer Prize for Biography or Autobiography, under a coconut tree while waiting for the barbecue.

45 Fort Santa Agueda. Built in 1800 as a lookout, Fort Santa Agueda once had 10 cannons. The best reason to visit it now is its commanding view of the Hagatna Bay and Hagatna. All that remains of this Spanish fort is part of its stone foundation built of coral and burnt limestone.

Fort Agueda's cannon served to protect Hagatna harbor and the lucrative galleon trade until the Spanish-American War when, in 1898, an American frigate entered Hagatna harbor with guns blazing. Today, the old Spanish cannon still point out over Hagatna Bay from the remnants of Fort Santo Agueda near the governor's residence.

It is said that this is also the site of Guam's first Catholic mission, established in 1668, but nothing of that era remains.



A tour guide, right, shows tourists one of the caves that served as a dwelling for ancient Chamorros.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

46 Tree Bar at Hilton. This open-air bar provides casual, tropical atmosphere while enjoying cocktails and listening to a live band. Hilton Guam Resort & Spa's beach front may be smaller than those of other hotels along Tumon Bay but it still gives you a scenic view of the bay.

47 Mermaid Tavern. The Mermaid Tavern and Grille, located in Hagatna, prides itself as "the only brewpub restaurant serving daily specials and Guam's only locally brewed beers." Friends in Guam and those who have already left the island love this spot for its food, drinks, live bands, and overall atmosphere. Who knows, you might also catch a glimpse of a Paul McCartney-lookalike playing the guitar, as my friends and I did during a night of fun.

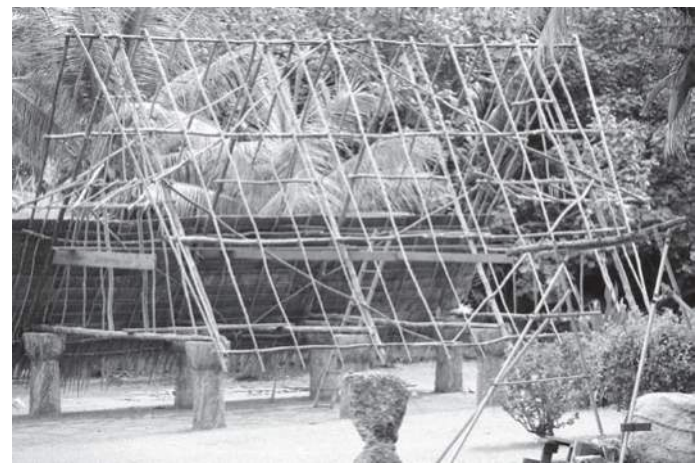
48 DFS Galleria Guam. Just out of curiosity, I finally got to see the inside of DFS Galleria this month after years of visiting Guam. It's all what you'd expect of a luxury retailer, bringing world-renowned brands together in one place. Name the luxury brands, from A to Z, they're all there—or maybe most of them.

The riverboat captain has to maneuver through bamboo trees that found their way to the water.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

The riverboat captain/tour guide demonstrates the use of life jackets at the beginning of the tour.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



A replica of an ancient Chamorro house under construction.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

49 San Antonio Spanish Bridge. Also known as the "Old Spanish Bridge," the San Antonio Bridge was built of cut stone by the Spaniards in the 1800s to span the Hagatna River. The original bridge survived the shelling of Hagatna in World War II and continued to be used after the war. But during the rehabilitation of Hagatna that began in 1945, the canal that it spanned was filled and the river diverted.

Today, it crosses just a shallow pool in a park-like setting located across Marine Corps Drive from the Hagatna Marina. Near the bridge is a statue of "Sirena the Mermaid." Legend has it that Sirena was a girl whose mother turned her into a mermaid for being disobedient.

50 University of Guam. Some people do tours of university campuses whenever they visit a new place, and the 100-acre University of Guam in Mangilao on the east coast is worth the stop. UOG, which marks its 60th anniversary this year, is dubbed "the major institution of higher education in the Western Pacific."

It is noted for its marine laboratory, "a pioneer in the field of marine biology." UOG's Micronesian Area Research Center has a wide selection of books, maps, and documents on the Pacific region.

51 Ifit wood products. Ifilwood or "ifit" in the vernacular is the territorial tree of Guam. Ifit wood products are sold in shops and even on roadsides, so watch out for beautifully reddish woodwork while driving on village roads.

52 Micronesia Mall. This is "the largest American style shopping center" in Guam, offering a daylong shopping experience (Check out Macy's and Bench) and a number of attractions including an indoor amusement center called Funtastic Park, Fiesta Food Court, and Micronesia Mall Theaters.

But the most awe inspiring of them all is "MIMO," which stands for "Micronesia Identified Moving Objects," a three-dimensional audiokinetic sculpture reaching a height of 8 meters.

To be continued.

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Disenfranchising America

Anything that makes it more difficult for people to vote in this democracy is wrong.

Unfortunately, it's nothing new.

Go back to Reconstruction and you will find plenty of examples. Oh heck, go back to 1607 and the Jamestown settlers.

Although there were only seven settlers involved in trying to set up an election in England's first permanent settlement in America, there were problems. Only six of them got to vote for the colony's council president. The seventh was denied a vote on suspicion of concealing a mutiny.

In the post-Civil War Reconstruction era, newly freed blacks made up the majority of the populations in Mississippi, Louisiana and South Carolina. In four other former Confederate states, blacks made up more than 40 percent of the population.

That's when white Democrats, fearing the power of the black voting bloc, allied with white supremacist organizations to intimidate and use violence to prevent blacks and poor whites from voting. Efforts to throw stumbling blocks in the paths of such voters didn't end there.

By the turn of the 20th century, voter suppression measures had become slightly more sophisticated. Poll taxes and literacy tests were part of the Jim Crow laws that enforced the "separate but equal" status of blacks. The last vestiges of these laws were not erased until the 1960s, when the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forced some Southern states to give up literacy tests.

These days, people would decry violence or literacy tests. But since the mid-2000s, the craze in voter suppression is requiring photo identification.

People with passports, drivers' licenses and other forms of government-issued photo ID can't understand why everyone doesn't have one. But estimates are that 10 percent of Americans don't.

They tend to be poor, black, elderly or disabled people in urban areas who do not drive cars. They tend to vote Democratic.

The vote suppression effort started before the 2004 presidential election with a concerted effort by Republican operatives to hold down turnout in Democratic precincts. In state after state, Republican legislators began sponsoring photo ID laws.

The legislatures were undeterred by facts—compiled by the Brennan Center for Justice—that show instances of voter fraud because of fraudulent identity occur less frequently than deaths by lightning.

Even so, 30 states have some voter photo ID law. Missouri's latest attempt at photo ID was thrown out by the courts. Expect it to return.

Some states have now turned to "purging" voter rolls. Georgia managed to disqualify 98,000 eligible voters when it did its purge in 2008. Nearly all of these "purges" are badly flawed in favor of Republicans. What a coincidence.

There is no excuse for not voting—at least not yet and not for most of us. But do it while you can. You never know when someone will try to take that right away from you.

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Rail trail to Qiqihar

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergarajr2031@aol.com) is a former PSS teacher and is currently writing from the campus of Shenyang Aerospace University in China.

Pinyin phonetics has "q" pronounced as "chi", and "c" as "ts". *Cha* (tea) is pronounced as *tsa* (not unfamiliar to local and regional dialects)*;* Qiqihar is pronounced *chee-chee-haar!*

Moving out of Harbin just as it got dark, our jovial next-door company tour group turned rowdy as they delved deeper into their boxes of Blue Ribbon Pabst and Bud (amazing how American marketing has gotten them to completely forget that Qingdao and Harbin beers taste better!).

It appears that the elders in the group are teachers at the company's attached university (Microsoft University offers degrees, and Apple U just got started to train CEOs how to think), and thereby revered as *lao shi,* teacher. At the graduate level of their beer consumption, they lit up their cigarettes in the air-conditioned berths. I do not think I was the only one who noticed but no one seemed to mind.

(Smoking in public places was banned at the onset of the Beijing Olympics, but the prohibition did not entail real teeth, nor were smokers deterred. After all, numerous tobacco companies are state-owned, and the local population is adept at skirting around prohibitions. Thus, restrooms/WCs are always tobacco smoke-laden, and in the case of the train, the connecting platform between cabooses is where one flicks one's lighter.)

In the course of getting to know my neighbors, I asked one of the young ladies wearing a t-shirt that declared: "I am an easy prey to temptation" if she understood the writing, and, of course, I got a *"ting bu dong"* (I don't know) answer, with an "I am sorry" follow up. I discovered a ChEnglish/EnglisCh speaker.

Later, a neighbor on the other side from Shanghai introduced herself when she heard me use the word "macroeconomics" (I guest lectured on the subject for a semester). She is a recent economics grad who now works for CITI group and was intrigued that one would actually be conversant in a field she considers esoteric. She had a very fair command of English.

With the neighboring onslaught of tobacco consumption, I first approached the t-shirt girl to see if the tour guide could advice the group about the smoking no-no. That's when she told me of the *lao shi* bit and she could not possibly tell them to quit. So I got the Shanghai girl to translate to the conductor for me, and the train personnel immediately went to tell the group of the rail company's prohibition on smoking.

Did that make a difference? Well, yes, save for two people who were either too inebriated to care, or were just too used to getting their own way. I fumed a little bit but if the other passengers were not going to do anything about it, I could make a big fuss, but then, I would be a bit on the hypocritical side.

Not too long ago, we reflected on my inability to resist the *kretek sigaret* that I had meant to throw away as it sat available for anyone to pick up in the faculty room. Not only did they not make the trash bin, I actually smoked all 12 sticks times six packs in the last three weeks. Though I cold turkey'd in '84, it did not take long to get back to the addiction. Now I am struggling to keep my distance from the sticks of light and thin feminine Esse Korean cigarettes left behind by an Arizona teacher. I snip the filters off.

Saulus of Tarsus once wrote that of the things he knows he ought to do, he doesn't, and what he knows he needs not do, does. In our case, we mused at what makes us turn into dark knights even if, or because of, we become lucid about the dark night of our soul?

We were struck by the case of James Holmes of Colorado who evidently plotted to perform the dastardly act he committed in Aurora, Colorado at the midnight screening of the new Batman movie. What demonic urges did he contend with?

We never got to see Qiqihar, the decidedly Muslim city of Heilongjiang, as we finally succumbed to slumber, perhaps because the whiff of tobacco from the neighboring berth was not altogether unpleasant to our own addiction to nicotine. We decided to stop and observe our ablution on our return trip back *from Manzhouli to Mukden.*

It is the other addictions that bedeviled our constitution in this night's passage into the Inner Mongolia of our soul, not so much to salve the lingering guilt from acts of omission and commission, but from the vantage point of seeking understanding for the nature of human behavior, most specifically our own, and the story we relate about it.

We grew up clear that there is no escape to "the devil made me do it" excuse. Even victims participate in their victimization since the external situation is never anyone's real contradiction, as even Holocaust survivors attest. Still, Zimmermann of Florida is now claiming as his defense that the incidence of his shooting Treyton Martin was "the will of God." A Republican congressman from Texas now laments that the Colorado shooting was a result of the decline of Judeo-Christian virtues in human conduct.

I have a friend who cannot stop figuring out how he can divest someone else's money into his side of the ledger, all in the name of free enterprise!

Whence cometh the meanness in our souls? *Chee chee haar haar!*

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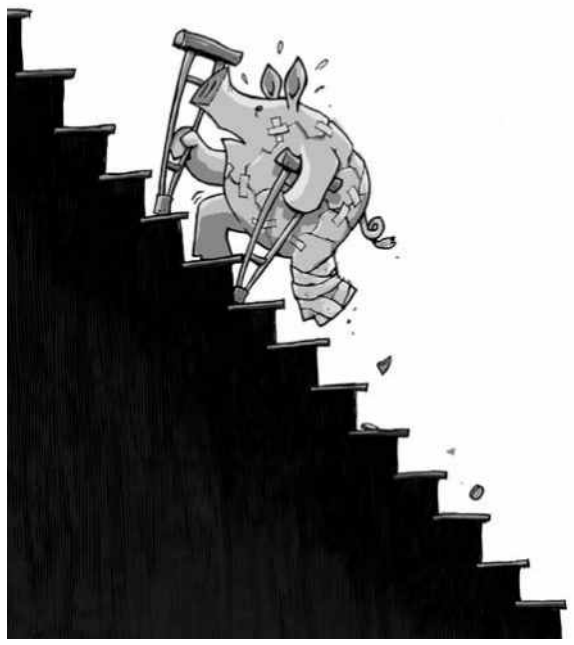
America's prosperity requires a level playing field

By JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ
Los Angeles Times

Joseph E. Stiglitz, recipient of the Nobel Prize in economics, chaired President Bill Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers and was chief economist of the World Bank. His latest book is The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future. *He wrote this for the* Los Angeles Times.

Despite what the debt and deficit hawks would have you believe, we can't cut our way back to prosperity. No large economy has ever recovered from serious recession through austerity. But there is another factor holding our economy back: inequality.

Any solution to today's problems requires addressing the economy's underlying weakness: a deficiency in aggregate demand. Firms won't invest if there is no demand for their products. And one of the key reasons for lack of demand is America's level of inequality—the highest in the advanced countries.



Because those at the top spend a much smaller portion of their income than those in the bottom and middle, when money moves from the bottom and middle to the top (as has been happening in America in the last dozen years), demand drops. The best way to promote employment today and sustained economic growth for the future, therefore, is to focus on the underlying problem of inequality. And this better economic performance in turn will generate more tax revenue, improving the country's fiscal position.

Even supply-side economists, who emphasize the importance of increasing productivity, should understand the benefits of attacking inequality. America's inequality does not come solely from market forces; those are at play in all advanced countries. Rather, much of the growth of income and wealth at the top in recent decades has come from what economists call rent-seeking—activities directed more at increasing the share of the pie they get rather than increasing the size of the pie itself.

Some examples: Corporate executives in the U.S. take advantage of deficiencies in our corporate governance laws to seize an increasing share of corporate revenue, enriching themselves at the expense of other stakeholders. Pharmaceutical companies successfully lobbied to prohibit the federal government—the largest buyer of drugs—from bargaining over drug prices, resulting in taxpayers overpaying by an estimated half a trillion dollars in about a decade. Mineral companies get resources at below competitive prices. Oil companies and other corporations get "gifts" in the hundreds of billions of dollars a year in corporate welfare, through special benefits hidden in the tax code. Some of this rent-seeking is very subtle—our bankruptcy laws give derivatives (such as those risky products that led to the $150 billion AIG bailout) priority but say that student debt can't be discharged, even in bankruptcy.

Rent-seeking distorts the economy and makes it less efficient. When, for instance, speculation gains get taxed at a lower rate than true innovation, resources that could support productivity-enhancing activities get diverted to gambling in the stock market and other financial markets. So too, much of the income in the financial sector, including that derived from predatory lending and abusive credit card practices, derives not from making our economy more efficient but from rent-seeking.

If we curbed these abuses by the financial sector, more resources (especially the scarce talent of some of our brightest young people) might be devoted to making a stronger economy rather than to exploiting the financially unsophisticated. And the banks might actually go back to the boring business of lending rather than high-risk and often opaque speculation.

Curbing rent-seeking is not that complicated (aside from the politics). It would take better financial regulations, fairer and better-designed bankruptcy laws, stronger and better-enforced antitrust laws, corporate governance laws that limit the power of CEOs to effectively set their own pay, and, in all of these areas, more transparency. Because so much of the income at the top is from rent-seeking, more progressive taxation (and in particular, taxation of capital gains) is necessary to discourage it. And if the additional revenue is used by the government for high-return public investments, there are double benefits.

Countries with high inequality tend to underinvest in their collective well-being, spending too little on such things as education, technology and infrastructure. The wealthy don't need public schools and parks. That's another reason economies with high inequality grow more slowly. Indeed, the United States has grown much more slowly since the 1980s, while inequality has been growing more rapidly than it did in the decades after World War II, when the country grew together.

Public investments are of particular importance today; they increase demand in the short run and productivity in the medium to long term. Increasing public investment would help make up for continued weakness in the private sector. Investments in training for new jobs could facilitate the economy's structural transformation, helping it move from sectors with declining employment (like manufacturing) to more dynamic sectors. Strengthening education would help restore the American dream and help make the country once again a land of opportunity where the talents of our young people are fully utilized.

The right says that we can achieve greater equality only by belt-tightening. But that vision would result in a slowdown of the economy from which all would suffer. Because so much of America's inequality arises from rent-seeking and other activities that distort the economy, curtailing inequality would actually strengthen the economy. Investing public money in the collective good rather than allowing it to be captured by rent-seekers would enhance growth at the same time it reduced inequality.

By giving priority to the austerity/deficit cutting agenda, we'll fail to achieve any of our goals. But by putting the equality agenda first, we can achieve all of them: We can have both more equality and more growth. And if we get better growth, our deficit will be reduced—it was weak growth that caused the deficit, not the other way around. We can achieve the kind of shared prosperity that was the hallmark of the country in the decades after World War II.

The art of not answering questions

By KEVIN HORRIGAN
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

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From time to time, political candidates come by the office so that we can ask them questions and they cannot answer them. The art of not answering questions is more difficult than you'd think.

You don't want to just flat say you won't answer a question. That makes people suspicious. The very best not-answerers, former President Bill Clinton comes to mind, have perfected the art of not answering questions in such grueling, point-by-point detail that until you go back your notes and listen to the tape, you don't realize that even though they spoke for five minutes, they never actually answered your question.

We had a newbie in here last week. His name is not important at this point, but he's a political novice who obviously had been coached to his eyeballs by his handlers: "If they ask you about this, talk about that. If they ask you about this, talk about that."

Professional political handlers train their candidates in a tactic they call "The Pivot." When asked a question you don't want to answer, you say, "I'm glad you asked that" and then you pivot like LeBron James and answer something completely different at great length. The longer you talk, the fewer questions you have to not answer.

Not everyone is LeBron James. The newbie hadn't mastered the moves. No matter what we asked him, he'd refer to his military career or his business career or his family and make an allusion that had absolutely no bearing on the issue he'd been asked about.

I thought afterward that he must have trouble buying groceries. When they ask, "Paper or plastic?" he'd tell them a story about basic training.

Once I knew a public relations man who was excellent at not answering questions that his clients didn't want answered, but his manner was not subtle. "That's not the question you want to ask," he'd say. "The question you want to ask is ..."

He would then go on to tell me something I didn't want to know. This tactic apparently worked well for him because he went on to have a fabulous career in public relations based on the simple tactic of not answering questions in a bossy way.

These days, according to a recent story in the *New York Times*, there are bossy new "quote approval" rules out on the campaign trail. Reporters can ask a candidate's aides whatever they want, and the aides can answer or not answer them in any fashion they like, but then the reporters have to email the answers back to the aides so they can revise them before publication.

Thus, on the off chance a reporter gets an actual answer, the aide gets a second chance to not answer the question. Apparently this is standard operating procedure for the Obama campaign.

I can't decide which side of this transaction is wimpier—the aide who's such a weasel that he won't stand by his own words, or the reporter who's so desperate to prove to his boss that he has access to big shots that he goes along with these ground rules.

My theory is that if someone doesn't want to talk to me, fine. But then he doesn't get to complain about what I write.

Which brings us to Mitt Romney. Of all the ways to not answer questions, he has chosen the worst one of all. He won't answer questions, and then he complains about the criticism.

The questions are why he won't release his tax returns for the years before 2010. He's even being careful about which parts of his 2011 tax record he releases.

All this does is make people speculate. Robert Bentley, the Republican governor of Alabama, said last week, "If you have things to hide, then maybe you're doing things wrong. I think you ought to be willing to release everything to the American people."

Ron Paul, the Republican House member from Houston, told Politico that Romney is making a mistake: "Politically, I think that would help him. In the scheme of things politically, you know, it looks like releasing tax returns is what the people want."

Even The National Review, founded by the sainted William F. Buckley, says Romney should open up.

Why would you give your opponents that kind of ammo? You don't answer a question, you give people a license to speculate. Tax havens? Deducting campaign costs as a business expense? Confusing statements about when he actually left his job at a hedge fund? Where'd that $102 million IRA come from?

That's just the start. Al-Qaida futures? The investment in the start-up company shovegrannyoffthecliff.com?

You run for president of the United States, or for that matter, any political office, you've got to cowboy up. The questions don't get any easier if you're elected.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Light and variable winds.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Light and variable winds.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88º ▼78º	▲88 º ▼78º	▲88º ▼78º	▲88º ▼78º	▲88º ▼78º

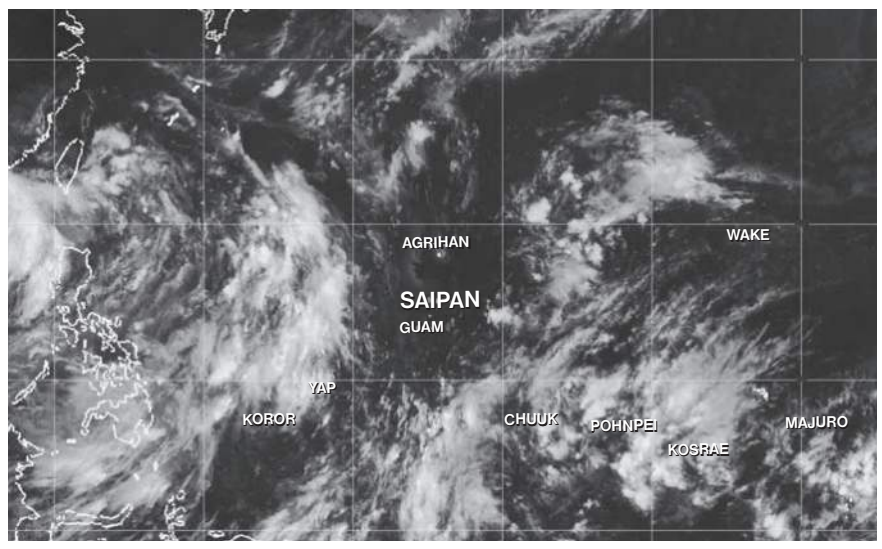
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Palau	Showers	▲83	▼76
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲90	▼78
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼78
Pohnpei	Showers	▲87	▼76
Kosrae	Showers	▲87	▼76
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼81

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲62	▼43
Beijing	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼75
Hong Kong	Thundershowers	▲86	▼82
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼74
London	Sunny	▲83	▼58
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲74	▼59
Manila	Thundershowers	▲87	▼78
Melbourne	Showers	▲57	▼45
Miami	Sunny	▲91	▼77
New York	Sunny	▲86	▼70
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲92	▼78
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲86	▼68
Pusan	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼76
Rome	Sunny	▲89	▼72
Salem	Sunny	▲86	▼57
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲61	▼51
Seoul	Cloudy	▲87	▼73
Tokyo	Thundershowers	▲90	▼77
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲90	▼74

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2012
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A monsoon trough reaches southeastward from near Luzon across 13N130E through a broad circulation centered northwest of Koror at 8N132E to end at EQ138E. Converging surface winds near the circulation and east of the trough are coupling with divergent upper-level winds to produce scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms from near Yap and Koror northward to southwest of Iwo To island within 260 miles of a line from 9N133E to 23N138E. Trade winds converging toward the southeastern end of the trough are generating similar weather from south of Yap to west of Chuuk or south of a line from 1N133E to 11N150E. An elongated upper-level low is centered east of Saipan at 15N150E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring near this feature south of Minami Tori Shima within 145 miles of a line from 14N151E to 21N155E to 24N163E. A trade-wind disturbance is causing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms near Chuuk and over Pohnpei and Kosrae between 1N and 11N from 152E to 166E. Trade-wind convergence is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms over Tarawa and Butaritari atolls within 90 miles of a line from 5N170E to 2N173E to 6N178E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

1:09 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
8:14 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
2:18 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
7:45 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:58 AM	6:49 PM
Friday	5:58 AM	6:49 PM
Saturday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Sunday	5:59 AM	6:48 PM
Monday	5:59 AM	6:48 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:03 PM	11:54 PM
Friday	1:03 PM	
Saturday	2:04 PM	12:47 AM
Sunday	3:05 PM	1:43 AM
Monday	4:05 PM	2:43 AM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 14, 2012

DEPARTURES			
GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
UA5062	2:40am	3:10am	1, 3, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			
UA5070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 4, 6, 7
UA5062	4:50am	5:40am	1, 3, 5
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA5074	11:30am	12:20pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily
UA5078	6:50pm	7:40pm	Daily
UA5072	9:55pm	10:45pm	Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)			
DL287	6:05am	8:45am	Daily
DL285	6:30am	9:15am	1, 3, 5, 7
DL297	4:35pm	7:20pm	Daily
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)			
0Z606/120	2:20am	8:50pm	1 via ICN
0Z606/120	2:50am	8:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)			
0Z606	2:20am	6:00am	1
0Z606	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
0Z604	3:30pm	6:55pm	Daily
SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			
0Z606/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
0Z606/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:05am	10:00pm	Daily via NRT
UA5076/183	3:10pm	8:45pm	Daily via GUM
UA5076/193	3:10pm	10:25pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
0Z604/703	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)			
0Z606/721	2:20am	11:50pm	1 via ICN
0Z606/721	2:50am	11:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5076/147	3:10pm	9:45pm	1, 5 via GUM
0Z604/723	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS			
ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
UA5062	3:40am	5:40am	1, 3, 5 via SPN
ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
UA5062	3:40am	4:15am	1, 3, 5
GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA5062	2:40am	4:15am	1, 3, 5 via ROP
UA 5069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 4, 6, 7
UA5071	7:10am	8:00am	Daily
UA5073	10:05am	10:55am	Daily
UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5077	5:25pm	6:15pm	Daily
UA5079	8:35pm	9:25pm	Daily
NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL286	7:40pm	12:15am +1	2, 4, 6, 7
DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:15pm	12:50am+1	Daily
OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN			
0Z119/606	9:30am	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
0Z119/606	9:30am	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
0Z603	8:50am	2:20pm	Daily
0Z605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
0Z605	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
DL172/288	7:50am	12:50am+1	Daily via NRT
UA190/5077	10:55am	6:15pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/5079	10:55am	9:25pm	3, 6 via GUM
0Z702/605	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
0Z702/605	12:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA5071	10:10pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/5071	9:45pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:25pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM
0Z704/603	11:40pm	2:20pm+1	Daily via ICN
HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
0Z724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
0Z722/605	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7
0Z722/605	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
UA180/5071	10:35pm	8:00am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

Business

Apple sags as consumers buy cheaper iPhones

By PETER SVENSSON
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—More consumers are buying the least expensive iPhones and iPads, a new phenomenon that is causing Apple's breakneck growth rate to slow.

On Tuesday, Apple Inc. revealed that both revenue and net income posted increases of just over 20 percent—cause for celebration at most companies, but meager by Apple standards.

Apple's growth was the slowest in more than two years, and failed to meet analyst expectations.

"The sheen is off the apple: It was a miss, no question about it," said David Rolfe, chief investment officer at Wedgewood Partners Inc.

Apple routinely blows past analyst expectations. It has only come in under their earnings expectations twice in ten years.

"We became too confident, in our expectations, that Apple had literally a perfect pulse on end demand throughout the globe... and quite simply, that wasn't the case this quarter," Rolfe said.

It wasn't so much the volume of sales that disappointed: Apple sold 17 million iPads in April to June period, beating expectations, and 26 million iPhones, at the low end of expectations.

But Apple's average selling prices for the gadgets declined to levels last seen in 2010 for the iPhone and the lowest levels ever in the case of the iPad.

Part of the reason was that consumers bought less expensive versions of the devices, said Apple's chief financial officer, Peter Oppenheimer. Apple introduced a new iPad in March, but kept the older model in stores while cutting its price.

The strengthening dollar also meant that overseas sales at constant prices translated into fewer dollars for Apple.

Sales in China, which have been a growth engine for the company, also declined compared to the previous quarter. CEO Tim Cook said that was because the iPhone 4S went on sale in China during the quarter that ended in March, and the company stocked inventories in the country.

Cook is known as an efficient manager of production and supply. He took over after founder and CEO Steve Jobs, who died in October.

Cook said he didn't see any effect of the economic slowdown in China. The troubles in Europe were evident, however. Sales to the continent grew just 16 percent.

Cook also blamed the tepid iPhone sales—up 28 percent from a year ago, but down from the previous quarter—on anticipation building for the next iPhone model. Apple hasn't said when it's arriving, but most company watchers now expect it in October.

AP

In this Thursday, July 19, 2012, photo an Apple customer Shayan Hooshmand, 11, uses PhotoBooth on a 21.5-inch iMac at an Apple store in Palo Alto, Calif.

Oil near $88 ahead of US inventory figures

BANGKOK (AP)—Oil was little changed near $88 a barrel Wednesday in Asia ahead of weekly U.S. crude inventory figures that give a reading on the state of near-term demand for fuel.

Benchmark crude for September delivery was down 20 cents at $88.30 a barrel at midday Bangkok time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 36 cents to end Tuesday at $88.50 per barrel in New York.

Brent crude was down 39 cents at $103.03 on the ICE futures exchange in London.

The price of oil has fallen from near $106 a barrel nearly three months ago as the world's major economies slow in unison. Europe is mired in its deepening debt crisis, China's breakneck growth has waned and the U.S. recovery has stumbled.

Data Tuesday from China suggested that stimulus measures are starting to help manufacturers but the global economy is not out of the woods and remains vulnerable to further shocks from Europe.

The U.S. Department of Energy is set to release weekly fuel stockpile figures on Wednesday. Data from the American Petroleum Institute on Tuesday suggested that the DOE figures will show a rise in U.S. crude inventories, which would suggest demand remains weak.

Energy analysts at The Schork Report said an increase in inventories is likely to keep oil under $90 a barrel this week.

In other energy futures trading, natural gas was down 3.1 cents at $3.156 per 1,000 cubic feet. Gasoline fell 2.6 cents to $2.70 a gallon and heating oil dropped 1 cent to $2.816 a gallon.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Toyota sold 4.97 million vehicles in first half

TOKYO (AP)—Toyota says it sold 4.97 million vehicles globally for the first six months of this year, a strong result that could see the Japanese automaker regain its crown as the world's top automaker from General Motors Co. Toyota Motor Corp. has rebounded from a period of dismal sales. Its production was hit by the quake and tsunami in northeastern Japan last year and then by flooding in Thailand. Before those disasters, its sales were dented by massive U.S. recalls. GM plans to release first-half global sales Aug. 2. Its vehicle sales probably exceeded the 4.56 million it clocked in the first half of last year given its strong performance in China and the U.S. Volkswagen AG earlier this month said it sold 4.45 million vehicles in the first half.

Japan trade deficit swells to $37B in first half

TOKYO (AP)—Japan reported its biggest half-year trade deficit ever as exports weakened and fuel imports soared to keep the power on while most reactors are idled in the aftermath of last year's nuclear crisis. The Ministry of Finance on Wednesday reported a 2.9 trillion yen ($37.4 billion) trade deficit for the first half ended June 30. The deficit was triple the size of the deficit reported for the same period last year. First half exports fell 2.5 percent from last year while imports surged 13.1 percent. The latest trade deficit is the biggest since Japan started compiling such records in 1979.

UPS sees global economy getting worse

NEW YORK (AP)—UPS expects the global economy to get worse before it gets better. Again. The world's largest package delivery company is more pessimistic about U.S. growth than many economists. It predicts global trade will grow even slower than the world's economies—a trend not seen since the recession. It's making cuts in its business and reducing its earnings projections. UPS on Tuesday lowered its forecast for all of 2012 and said its third-quarter earnings will fall below last year's results. Customers are worried about the global economy weakening in the second half of the year, the company said. Their skittishness was also felt in the second quarter, where UPS missed analysts' expectations for both earnings and revenue.

Stocks drop for a 3rd day as earnings slide

NEW YORK (AP)—A parade of grim news, from weak corporate earnings to a pullback at U.S. factories to spreading fault lines in Europe's debt crisis, sent investors fleeing stocks for a third straight day on Tuesday. As if that weren't bad enough, Apple delivered a rare earnings disappointment after the closing bell, boding poorly for Wednesday's trading. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 104.14 points, or 0.8 percent, to 12,617.32. It was the third triple-digit point loss in a row for the blue chip index. The last time that happened was September, when fears were rife that the U.S. was on the brink of another recession.

IMF says China's economy reached 'soft landing'

SHANGHAI (AP)—China has achieved a "soft landing" in its economic slowdown, the IMF says while cautioning that more sweeping reforms are needed to ensure healthy growth in the longer term.

In a report Wednesday on its website, the IMF praised China's leaders for adjusting policies to help counter the malaise plaguing the global economy that has also slowed robust growth in China and other emerging nations.

"China's economy seems to be undergoing a soft landing, though global headwinds are increasing," said the report, issued after IMF consultations with Beijing.

It notes that China has reduced some imbalances in the world's second-biggest economy, such as its once huge trade surplus, and brought inflation under control. But it pointed to risks from excessive bank lending and urged more effective regulation to ensure financial stability.

"Overall we are very confident that China is experiencing what we would call a soft landing," Markus Rodlauer, deputy director of the IMF's Asia & Pacific Department, said in a video interview.

"This means growth of about 8 percent. This is less than it was in the past but still it compares very favorably to what is happening around us," he said.

China's second-quarter growth fell to a three-year low of 7.6 percent as exports, consumer spending and factory output weakened. Analysts say a rebound might begin in the second half but could take longer to take root and be weaker than previously expected.

That has dampened hopes it might make up for weak Western demand and drive global growth. Just a week earlier, the IMF had cut its 2012 growth forecast for China's economy by 0.2 percentage point to 8 percent and said a "hard landing" was still possible.

It forecasts growth in 2013 of 8.5 percent.

Preliminary results of a monthly survey of Chinese manufacturers released Tuesday showed the contraction in manufacturing eased in July. HSBC's Purchasing Managers' Index, which combines various measures of manufacturing activity, rose to 49.5 from 48.2. Readings above 50 denote growth. The individual gauge of factory output showed an expansion in production.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
12,617.32	1,338.31	2,862.99
-104.14	-12.21	-27.16
-0.82%	-0.90%	-0.94%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	0.9779	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7577	Philippine Peso	42.135
British Pound	0.6447	Indian Rupee	56.3812	Singapore Dollar	1.2621
Canadian Dollar	1.0214	Indonesian Rupiah	9519.75	South Korean Won	1150.95
Chinese Yuan	6.3946	Japanese Yen	78.164	Swiss Franc	0.9953
Euro	0.8287	Malaysian Ringgit	3.184	Taiwan Dollar	30.1945
		New Zealand Dollar	1.278	Thailand Baht	31.7825

Nation

Alleged shooter was surrounded by brain experts

By KRISTEN WYATT and NICHOLAS RICCARDI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP
Actor Christian Bale and his wife Sibi Blazic visit a memorial to the victims of Friday's mass shooting, Tuesday, July 24, 2012, in Aurora, Colo.

CENTENNIAL, Colo. (AP)—James Holmes spent a year in a small neuroscience doctoral program, surrounded by scientists and roughly three dozen classmates delving into the inner workings of the brain.

The University of Colorado, Denver, isn't saying if they had any warning signs.

Experts say, however, the intimacy of the program and its focus on the brain may not have been enough for staff and students to detect that Holmes was on a course that police say ended with a deadly rampage at a midnight showing of the new Batman movie.

Supported by a prestigious federal grant, Holmes, 24, was in the first year of a program at the Anschutz Medical Campus dedicated to neuroscience, studying such topics as how the brain works or malfunctions or helping develop drugs to treat epilepsy and other disorders.

But it is not behavioral science or psychology, experts say.

David Eagleman, who runs the Initiative on Neuroscience and the Law at Baylor University, said some neuroscientists are experts in mental illnesses and aberrant behavior, but others spend most of their time studying molecular chemistry.

"It's really only a fraction of professors" who could identify a simmering mental disorder, Eagleman said. "Many people in neuroscience are not specialized in the issue of picking up mental illness ... There are plenty of people who just study mice and cats and stuff like that."

Holmes is accused of methodically stockpiling weapons and explosives at work and at home that police say he used to kill 12 people and wound 58 more at a movie theater Friday in nearby Aurora. Police say he also booby-trapped his apartment with the intent to kill police officers.

Holmes' arraignment hearing is on Monday.

Attention continued to focus on victims of the attack and their grieving families, many of whom turned on Tuesday to the grim task of preparing for funerals. Batman star Christian Bale visited survivors of the shooting and stopped by a makeshift memorial to victims near the movie theater where they were shot.

Authorities say Holmes began shopping for firearms while studying neuroscience. He joined the program in June 2011 after receiving a National Institutes of Health grant to cover his tuition and provide a $26,000 annual living allowance.

The school refuses to say what specifically Holmes studied. But an online syllabus listed him as making a presentation in May during a class called "Biological Basis of Psychiatric and Neurological Disorders."

In early June, Holmes took a standard oral exam that ends a graduate student's first year. The school will not say whether he passed, but Holmes filed paperwork to withdraw from the program just days later. He never provided a written explanation for his departure.

"He had, as is now common knowledge, excellent academic credentials," said Barry Shur, dean of the university's graduate program.

Shur said the graduate program is "like a family" in which faculty carefully monitor students' progress.

"It would be a logical step to assume there were people in that program who worked closely with him and would have the expertise to assess his behavior," said Mary Ellen O'Toole, a former FBI profiler and the author of the book "Dangerous Instincts: How Gut Feelings Betray Us."

"But being able to recognize concerning, troubling behavior does not mean you can prevent a mass homicide," O'Toole said. "There are many people at a university level who act quirky and strange and don't go out and commit mass murder."

Academics studying the human brain may not have the same ability to size up threats as someone who makes his living spending time with people firing guns, O'Toole said.

Penn State loses one sponsor, others could follow

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP)—State Farm is pulling its ads from Penn State football broadcasts, while General Motors is reconsidering its sponsorship deal and Wall Street is threatening to downgrade the school's credit rating, suggesting the price of the sexual abuse scandal could go well beyond the $60 million fine and other penalties imposed by the NCAA.

Bloomington, Ill.-based State Farm said it had been reviewing its connection to Penn State since the arrest of retired assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky last November. The insurance company said it will pull ads from broadcasts of Nittany Lions home games but continue to advertise during Penn State's away contests.

"We will not directly support Penn State football this year," State Farm spokesman Dave Phillips said Tuesday. "We just feel it was the best decision."

State Farm had no immediate information on how much money is at stake.

The NCAA imposed unprecedented sanctions against Penn State on Monday, including the fine, a four-year bowl ban and a sharp reduction in the number of football scholarships it may offer.

The governing body also erased 14 years of victories, wiping out 111 of coach Joe Paterno's wins and stripping him of his standing as the most successful coach in the history of big-time college football.

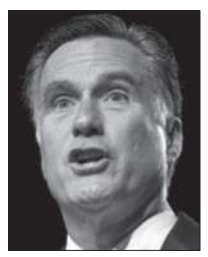
NCAA President Mark Emmert said he relied on a report by former FBI Director Louis Freeh, who found that Paterno and three top officials concealed child sexual abuse allegations against Sandusky more than a decade ago to protect the school and its powerful football program.

With Penn State's once-sterling reputation in tatters, the university could face an exodus of sponsors unwilling to have their brands linked to scandal, said Kevin Adler, founder of Chicago-based Engage Marketing Inc.

Romney seeks independent probe of White House leak

RENO, Nev. (AP)—Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney on Tuesday called for an independent investigation into claims the White House had leaked national security information for President Barack Obama's political gain, part of a searing speech that marked a wholesale indictment of the Democrat's foreign policy.

In a race that has so far focused almost entirely on the sluggish economy, Romney also criticized Obama over potential cuts in the defense budget and critiqued his handling of Iran's nuclear threat, the violence in Syria and relations with Israel during an appearance at the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention.



Romney

It was Romney's first foreign policy speech since he emerged as the likely Republican presidential nominee. He accused Obama of putting politics over national security, a serious charge that went straight at a policy area where national polls show the president with the edge.

The turn also was a reminder that the increasingly biting campaign, which paused over the weekend in deference to the deadly movie theater shooting in Colorado, was on again in earnest.

"This conduct is contemptible," Romney said of the leaks of classified information. "It betrays our national interest. It compromises our men and women in the field. And it demands a full and prompt investigation by a special prosecutor, with explanation and consequence."

Attorney General Eric Holder has appointed two federal prosecutors to get to the bottom of the leaks, but Romney suggested that wasn't good enough. The White House has rejected calls for a special prosecutor, saying there is no need for one.

Romney stopped short of accusing Obama specifically of leaking information that included details of the mission that killed Osama bin Laden last year. He made the charge as he prepared to embark later Tuesday on a trip to Great Britain, Israel and Poland and meetings with a host of foreign leaders.

Budget office: Obama's health law reduces deficit

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama's health care overhaul will shrink rather than increase the nation's huge federal deficits over the next decade, Congress' nonpartisan budget scorekeepers said Tuesday, supporting Obama's contention in a major election-year dispute with Republicans.

About 3 million fewer uninsured people will gain health coverage because of last month's Supreme Court ruling granting states more leeway, and that will cut the federal costs by $84 billion, the Congressional Budget Office said in the biggest changes from earlier estimates.

Republicans have insisted that "Obamacare" will actually raise deficits—by "trillions," according to presidential candidate Mitt Romney. But that's not so, the budget office said.

The office gave no updated estimate for total deficit reductions from the law, approved by Congress and signed by Obama in 2010. But it did estimate that Republican legislation to repeal the overhaul—passed recently by the House—would itself boost the deficit by $109 billion from 2013 to 2022.

"Repealing the (health care law) will lead to an increase in budget deficits over the coming decade, though a smaller one than previously reported," budget office director Douglas Elmendorf said in a letter to House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio.

The law's mix of spending cuts and tax increases would more than offset new spending to cover uninsured people, Elmendorf explained.

Tuesday's budget projections were the first since the Supreme Court upheld most of the law last month but gave states the option of rejecting a planned expansion of Medicaid for their low-income residents. As a consequence, the budget office said the law will cover fewer uninsured people.

Thirty million uninsured people will be covered by 2022, or about 3 million fewer than projected this spring before the court ruling, the report said.

As a result, taxpayers will save about $84 billion from 2012 to 2022. That brings the total cost of expanding coverage down to $1.2 trillion, from about $1.3 trillion in the previous estimate.

Asia

Philippine ex-leader gets bail ruling, still in detention

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Philippine court on Wednesday granted bail to former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on election sabotage charges after a judge cast doubt on the evidence against her. But she is unlikely to leave detention immediately because of a pending corruption case.

Lawyers for Arroyo immediately posted the 1 million peso ($23,250) cash bail. Pasay City Regional Trial Court spokeswoman Felda Domingo said the court issued an order for her release Wednesday, but cases pending in other courts will prevent her from being freed.

President Benigno Aquino III's spokesman Edwin Lacierda said Arroyo still faces a non-bailable corruption case in the anti-graft court Sandiganbayan. That court also has issued an order preventing her from leaving the country.

But Ferdinand Topacio, a spokesman for Arroyo's husband, said there was a "very high" probability of Arroyo leaving detention Wednesday. He said the anti-graft court had not issued an arrest warrant for her.

Arroyo, who has been suffering from a neck ailment, has been detained at a government hospital since December.

Aquino has promised to prosecute Arroyo and other former administration officials for alleged corruption, which he blames for widespread poverty in the Philippines. Arroyo says she's innocent of all charges against her and accuses her successor of pursuing a political vendetta.

Arroyo

Topacio said the bail ruling was "a triumph of justice ... against a creeping authoritarianism that threatens to envelop our land and turn it into a judicial wasteland."

Government prosecutors last week filed plunder charges against her and nine other former officials for alleged misuse of 365 million pesos ($8.7 million) in state lottery funds. Topacio said Arroyo's lawyers have filed motions questioning the filing of the plunder charges without first informing Arroyo of the criminal investigation results so she could respond to them before an indictment is made.

Arroyo and her husband face a separate graft case related to an overpriced government contract with Chinese telecommunications giant ZTE Corp. for a $330 million national broadband project that was later scuttled because of the scandal. They pleaded not guilty during arraignment in April.

The trial in Arroyo's election sabotage case is scheduled to begin next month. She's accused of ordering the tampering of 2007 elections to ensure victory for her candidates in southern Maguindanao province.

Domingo said Judge Jesus Mupas found that the evidence linking Arroyo to the alleged vote-rigging "is not that strong to deny her bail."

She said the government's only witness against Arroyo, former provincial administrator Norie Unas, has testified that he overheard her give instructions to rig the polls during a meeting with Maguindanao officials led by former Gov. Andal Ampatuan Sr. Ampatuan is also jailed on a separate case of multiple murder for the massacre of 57 people, including 30 journalists and his political opponents in 2009.

Commission on Elections chairman Sixto Brillantes said the commission will appeal the bail order.

Members of the left-wing New Patriotic Alliance protested the bail order at the gates of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, where Arroyo is detained.

China's newest city is on tiny island, has big aim

By ALEXA OLESEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING (AP)—China's newest city is a remote island in the South China Sea barely large enough to host a single airstrip. It has a post office, bank, supermarket and a hospital, but little else. Fresh water comes by freighter on a 13-hour journey from China's southernmost province.

Welcome to Sansha, China's expanding toehold in the world's most disputed waters, portions of which are also claimed by Vietnam, the Philippines and other neighbors. On Tuesday, as blustery island winds buffeted palm trees, a new mayor declared Sansha to be China's newest municipality.

Beijing has created the city administration to oversee not only the rugged outpost with a population of just 1,000 but also hundreds of thousands of square kilometers (miles) of water where it wants to strengthen its control over disputed—and potentially oil-rich—islands.

The Philippines said it does not recognize the city or its jurisdiction, and Vietnam said China's actions violated international law. The United States also voiced its concern over "unilateral moves" in the South China Sea where it says collective diplomacy is needed to resolve competing claims.

The city administration is on tiny Yongxing island, 350 kilometers (220 miles) southeast from China's tropical Hainan Island. The Cabinet approved Sansha last month to "consolidate administration" over the Paracel and Spratly island chains and the Macclesfield Bank, a large, completely submerged atoll that boasts rich fishing grounds that is also claimed by Taiwan and the Philippines.

AP
In this photo taken on Friday, July 20, 2012, a fishing boat sails past the Meiji reef off the island province of Hainan in the South China Sea. China has rolled out the red carpet for its newest city, on a small, remote island in the South China Sea that is also claimed by Vietnam.

Vietnam and China both claim the Paracels, of which Yongxing, little more than half the size of Manhattan's Central Park, is part. The two countries along with the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also claim all or parts of the Spratlys.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea and its island groups, and its disputes occasionally erupt into open confrontation. The islands, many of them occupied by garrisons from the various claimants, sit amid some of the world's busiest commercial sea lanes, along with rich fishing grounds and potential oil and gas deposits. China has approved the formal establishment of a military garrison for Sansha, though specific details have yet to be released.

Official broadcaster China Central Television aired Tuesday morning's formal establishment ceremony live from Sansha, with speeches from the new mayor and other officials.

The Chinese flag was raised and national anthem played before plaques for the Sansha Municipal Government and the Sansha Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China were unveiled on a white-columned government building.

Mayor Xiao Jie trumpeted Sansha's important role in protecting China's sovereignty. He said the designation of Sansha as a new city was "a wise decision made by the party and the government of China to protect the sovereign rights of China, and to strengthen the protection and the development of natural resources."

The official Xinhua News Agency reported earlier that Sansha's jurisdiction covers just 13 square kilometers (5 square miles) of land, including other islands and atolls in the South China Sea around Yongxing, but 2 million square kilometers (770,000 square miles) of surrounding waters.

Sansha means "three sandbanks" in Mandarin and appears to refer to the Chinese names for the disputed island chains and atoll, known in Chinese as the West, South and Middle Banks, or Xisha, Nansha and Zhongsha.

Jie

A description from a former People's Liberation Army officer who was among the officials overseeing the island before Sansha was established paints a picture of a harsh and isolated post where officials rotate staffing for a month at a time. Though, he said fishermen live there all year round.

"The living conditions are pretty simple," Tan Xiankun, director of the office in Hainan overseeing Xisha and other South China Sea territories, told The Associated Press in 2010. "It's very humid and hot, more than 30 degrees, and there's salt everywhere. There's no fresh water, except for what's shipped in and what's collected from rain water."

Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Raul Hernandez said Manila has expressed its concern and registered a strong protest with Beijing over the decision to set up a military garrison on Sansha.

"The Philippines does not recognize the Sansha city and the extent of its jurisdiction and considers recent measures taken by China as unacceptable," Hernandez told a news conference.

Vietnam's Foreign Ministry spokesman Luong Thanh Nghi said that Vietnam had protested to the Chinese foreign ministry.

"China's establishment of the so-called 'Sansha City' ... violated international law, seriously violating Vietnam sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly archipelagoes," the statement said.

Asked about the establishment of the city, U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told a news briefing Tuesday: "We remain concerned should there be any unilateral moves of this kind that would seem to prejudge an issue that we have said repeatedly can only be solved by negotiations, by dialogue and by a collaborative diplomatic process among all the claimants."

The United States says it does not take a position on the competing sovereignty claims over land features in the South China Sea but has a national interest in freedom of navigation in its busy sea lanes and in maintenance of peace and stability.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Strong quake rocks waters off Indonesia; 1 killed

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia (AP)—A powerful earthquake jolted western Indonesia early Wednesday, killing a man and sending panicked residents fleeing from homes in towns and villages across Sumatra island's northern tip. No tsunami was generated and there were no reports of damage. The magnitude 6.6 quake hit about 7:30 a.m. (0030 GMT) and was centered 28 kilometers (17 miles) northwest of Aceh province's Sinabang town at a depth of 45 kilometers (28 miles), according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Sutopo Purwo Nugroho from the National Disaster Management Agency said a 70-year-old man who was suffering from hypertension died as he fled in panic and fell down, but there were no other casualties reported and no reports of damage. Suharjono, from Indonesia's meteorology and geophysic agency, said the earthquake had no potential to generate a tsunami. He said a quake that close to the coast would have to be more powerful to generate a giant wave.

Belgian killed in Philippines, suspect arrested

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine police officials say they have arrested a man who has confessed to killing his 68-year-old Belgian employer with an ax and then setting a fire to cover up the crime. Chief Supt. Marcelo Garbo says the 29-year-old Filipino admitted he hit Steegmans Florent several times in the head with an ax at the Belgian's Internet cafe in central Bohol province before setting the shop on fire. Garbo said Wednesday that the suspect is believed to have harbored a grudge against Florent. He says the man is believed to have plotted late Monday's murder and arson in Danao township all by himself. Firefighters who put out the blaze discovered Florent's body inside the shop. The Belgian had a Filipino wife. His hometown was not immediately known.

World

Top general, friend of Syrian president, defects

By BEN HUBBARD
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

This citizen journalism image provided by Shaam News Network SNN, taken on Monday, July 23, 2012, purports to show damage from heavy shelling of the al-Qadam district of Damascus, Syria.

BEIRUT (AP)—Fighter jets unleashed sonic booms and helicopter gunships strafed rebels as they pressed their fight Tuesday into new neighborhoods in Aleppo, Syria's largest city. Farther south, ground troops combed Damascus after the nearly complete rout of the largest rebel assault yet on the capital.

After a series of setbacks, President Bashar Assad's forces are solidifying their grip on Aleppo and Damascus, knowing that their fall would almost certainly spell the regime's end.

■ ■ ■

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia chided its longtime ally Syria on Tuesday over its threat to use chemical weapons in case of a foreign attack, but Moscow gave no sign it was abandoning President Bashar Assad's regime, despite growing international condemnation over the violence in the Arab country.

Syria is Russia's last remaining ally in the Middle East and hosts the only naval base Moscow has outside the former Soviet Union. Russia has protected Syria from international sanctions and supplied it with weapons amid an escalating civil war.

On Monday, Syria threatened to unleash its chemical and biological weapons if it faces a foreign attack - its first-ever acknowledgement it possesses weapons of mass destruction.

■ ■ ■

The regime appears to be regaining momentum after a series of setbacks that put it on the defensive. But while its forces easily outgun the rebels in direct confrontations, the rebellion has spread them thin—pointing to a drawn-out civil war.

Syria's two biggest cities, home to more than one-third of the country's 22 million people and centers of its political and economic life, have remained largely insulated from the unrest that has ravaged much of the rest of the country during the 16-month conflict.

But this month, rebels from surrounding areas have pushed into both, bringing street battles to previously calm urban neighborhoods.

The fighting in each city has followed a similar script.

After building up their forces in the countryside and clashing with government troops there, rebels pressed into Damascus early last week, sparking clashes around the city with government troops.

The opposition landed a harsh blow July 18, when a bomb tore through a high-level security meeting, killing four top Assad security advisers including his minister of defense and his older sister's husband. All had been key architects of the government's efforts to quash the uprising.

But the battle turned when the regime deployed the overwhelming force it has used to crush rebels elsewhere, shelling residential areas and targeting rebels with machine guns and missiles fired from attack helicopters.

On Tuesday, the government appeared to have largely retaken the capital. Activists reported shelling and sporadic clashes between troops and rebels in and around the city, but acknowledged that most fighters had withdrawn.

"They had to withdraw because they lacked ammunition and organization, because the regime was stronger and because they didn't want to hurt civilians," Damascus activist Mohammed Saeed said via Skype.

9 killed in Iraq attacks

BAGHDAD (AP)—Bomb attacks in Iraq killed nine people Tuesday, officials said, a bloody aftershock to the country's deadliest day in two years that followed the declaration of a new al-Qaida offensive.

Police said an explosives-rigged motorcycle killed six Kurdish intelligence officials on a late afternoon security patrol in the northeast town of Tuz Khormato, located 210 kilometers (130 miles) north of Baghdad.

A local medic confirmed the deaths. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to release the information.

Less than an hour earlier and a little farther south, a parked minibus blew up near a police checkpoint in the city of Baquoba. The blast killed three passers-by and wounded 29 others, said local council spokeswoman Samira al-Shibli.

The blasts followed a wave of violence across Iraq on Monday during which 115 people were killed. Many of those attacks also targeted security forces. Al-Qaida's new leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced days before that the network would stage attacks and try to rebuild tribal alliances to make a comeback in Sunni areas from which it had retreated in 2007-2008.

Iraq's Shiite-led government has been under intense pressure to prove it can protect the country from terrorism after years of similar violence and, on Tuesday, continued its trial of the Sunni vice president who is accused of running death squads against security forces and religious pilgrims.

But the case has also deepened the rift between Iraq's political factions, which break down largely on sectarian lines.

Witnesses testified during the court hearing about weapons taken from the homes of Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi and Ahmed Qahtan, his son-in-law and office manager.

Al-Hashemi, who is in Turkey avoiding trial, has denied the wrongdoing and has said he is the victim of a political vendetta by Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. He is one of Iraq's highest-ranking Sunni politicians.

Al-Hashemi's defense lawyers also announced that an Iraqi appeals court refused to allow President Jalal Talabani to testify in the trial

In May, al-Hashemi filed a request to have Talabani, an ethnic Kurd, serve as a character witness, along with two other government officials and five Sunni lawmakers. Defense lawyers sought to ask if they had any information about al-Hashemi's role in terror attacks.

But the three-judge panel rejected the request, saying it would add nothing to the case.

248 human fetuses found in Russian forest

MOSCOW (AP)—Villagers in Russia's south Urals region have stumbled upon a gruesome discovery—four barrels left in a forest containing 248 human fetuses, prompting an official probe, officials said Tuesday.

Police in the Sverdlovsk region said the fetuses, preserved in formaldehyde, were kept in barrels with tags marked with surnames and numbers.

The fetuses were found a few miles away from a highway linking the region's capital, Yekaterinburg, with another big city, Nizhny Tagil. Police believe that they may have come from four local hospitals and have started an investigation.

The fetuses have been placed in a local morgue.

The Health Ministry said it had ordered a check of local hospitals to prevent such incidents occurring again.

"The rude violation of medical ethics causes indignation," the ministry said in a statement. "It's inadmissible from both the moral and legal viewpoint."

The Russian Orthodox Church used the incident to emphasize its opposition against abortions. Spokesman Vladimir Legoida said in a statement that it "highlighted the degradation of our society."

NASA: Strange and sudden massive melt in Greenland

ON THE NET

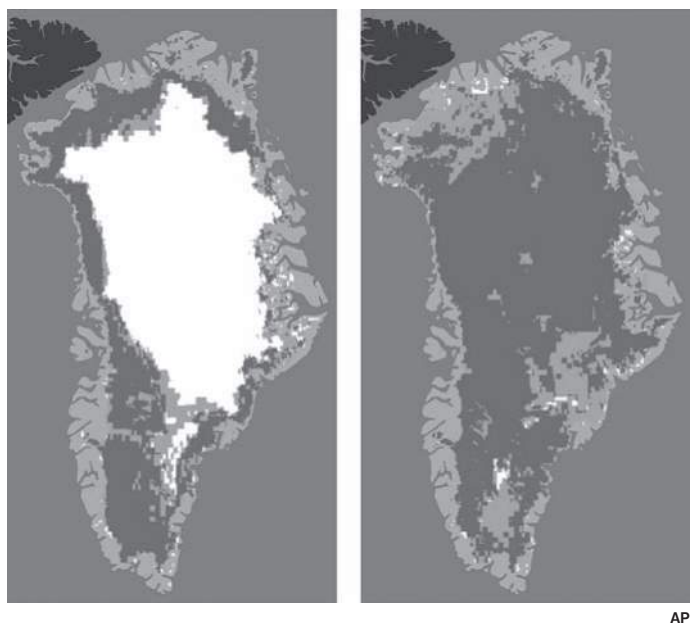
NASA: http://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/features/greenland-melt.html

WASHINGTON (AP)—Nearly all of Greenland's massive ice sheet suddenly started melting a bit this month, a freak event that surprised scientists.

Even Greenland's coldest and highest place, Summit station, showed melting. Ice core records show that last happened in 1889 and occurs about once every 150 years.

Three satellites show what NASA calls unprecedented melting of the ice sheet that blankets the island, starting on July 8 and lasting four days. Most of the thick ice remains. While some ice usually melts during the summer, what was unusual was that the melting happened in a flash and over a widespread area.

"You literally had this wave of warm air wash over the Greenland ice sheet and melt it," NASA ice scientist Tom Wagner said Tuesday.



AP

These undated handout images provided by NASA shows the extent of surface melt over Greenland's ice sheet on July 8, left, and July 12, right. Measurements from three satellites showed that on July 8, about 40 percent of the ice sheet had undergone thawing at or near the surface. In just a few days, the melting had dramatically accelerated and an estimated 97 percent of the ice sheet surface had thawed by July 12.

The ice melt area went from 40 percent of the ice sheet to 97 percent in four days, according to NASA. Until now, the most extensive melt seen by satellites in the past three decades was about 55 percent.

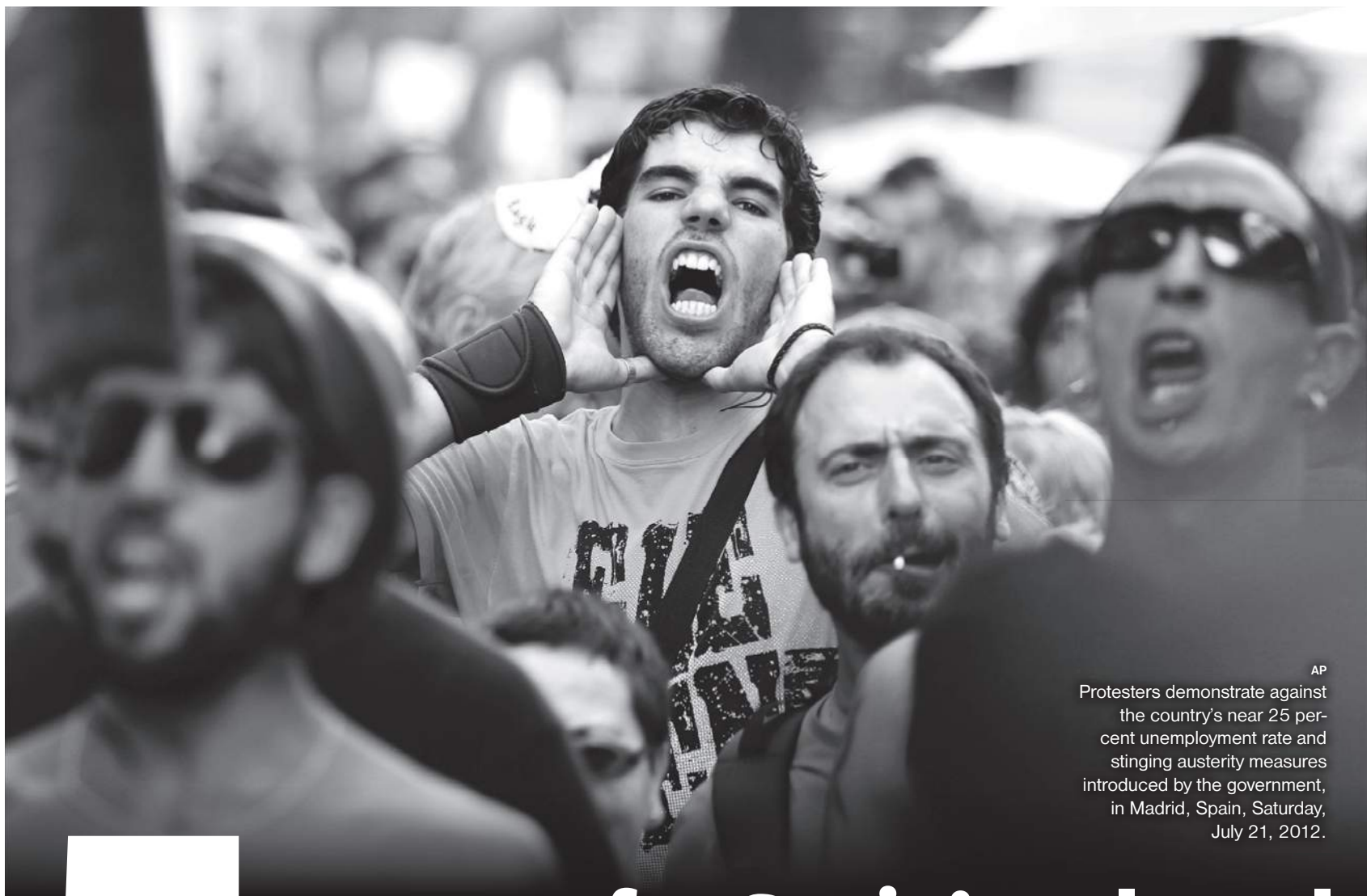
Wagner said researchers don't know how much of Greenland's ice melted, but it seems to be freezing again.

"When we see melt in places that we haven't seen before, at least in a long period of time, it makes you sit up and ask what's happening?" NASA chief scientist Waleed Abdalati said. It's a big signal, the meaning of which we're going to sort out for years to come."

About the same time, a giant iceberg broke off from the Petermann Glacier in northern Greenland. And the National Snow and Ice Data Center on Tuesday announced that the area filled with Arctic sea ice continues near a record low.

Wagner and other scientists said because this Greenland-wide melting has happened before they can't yet determine if this is a natural rare event or one triggered by man-made global warming.

Focus



AP
Protesters demonstrate against the country's near 25 percent unemployment rate and stinging austerity measures introduced by the government, in Madrid, Spain, Saturday, July 21, 2012.

5 reasons for Spain's colossal ECONOMIC TROUBLES

By ALAN CLENDENNING and HAROLD HECKLE
Associated Press

MADRID (AP)—Spain's financial crisis is a lot like peeling an onion: remove one troubled layer and you expose another.

Repeated efforts since 2009 by successive governments to fix the country's problems have managed to undermine confidence in the fourth-largest economy among the 17 nations that use the euro.

A recession is deepening in Spain and a growing number of its regional governments are seeking financial lifelines. These developments are adding to the problems of a government already struggling to prop up its shaky banking system.

Spain's main IBEX stock index has lost 3 percent over the last three days while the government's borrowing costs for its debt have soared to their highest levels since the country joined the euro in 1999.

Last Friday, Spain finally got approval from the other 16 members of the eurozone to access up to €100 billion ($121 billion) in loans to prop up its banks which are weighed by down by €180 billion in soured real estate investments.

Spanish officials had hoped a solution for the banks would ease some concerns about the state of the country's finances and prompt investors to stop demanding unmanageably high interest rates for government debt. Such high rates forced Greece, Ireland and Portugal to seek full-blown public finance bailouts.

But instead of easing off, investors panicked again.

On Monday the country's central bank said that the economy shrank by 0.4 percent during the second quarter, compared with the previous three months. The government predicts the economy won't return to growth until 2014 as new austerity measures hurt consumers and businesses.

On top of that, Spain is facing new costs as a growing number of regional governments that function like U.S. states ask federal authorities for assistance.

By Tuesday, investors had sent benchmark borrowing rate for Spain's 10-year bonds to 7.53 percent, just the latest in a series of records. By contrast, Germany's is just 1.26 percent.

If Spain's borrowing rates continue to rise, the government may end up being locked out of international markets and be forced to seek a financial rescue that would push Europe's rescue funds to breaking point.

Here are five reasons investors are scared about Spain:

1 HURTING REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

During Spain's property boom, the country's 17 semi-autonomous regions raked in unprecedented revenues from building permits and fees. They windfall to finance infrastructure projects and the ranks or public employees swelled. Across Spain, highways, parks, public swimming pools, gleaming government buildings and airports sprung up.

Now the property market has collapsed and the regions can no longer afford to pay their bills and manage their debts.

The regions' problems have been a focus of investor concern for more than a year, but the fears skyrocketed last Friday when the region of Valencia announced it would be the first to tap a federal fund set up to bail out the hurting regions. Over the weekend, the region of Murcia said it also needed help.

More regions are expected to join the queue, threatening to overwhelm the central government. No one knows how much money the regions will need, though leading newspaper El Pais said they have combined debts of €140 billion and that €36 billion must be refinanced this year.

The fund set up by the government on July 13 will have €18 billion in capital, part of it raided from the national lottery. If more funds are needed, Spain would either have to issue debt at punishing rates—or ask for a bailout.

2 WEAK GROWTH PROSPECTS

While one out of every four Spaniards are unemployed, the rate for job-seekers under 25 stands at 52 percent. Emigration by young adults is on the rise, and companies are taking advantage of new labor reforms that make it cheaper to fire workers. The country is in its second recession in three years.

Just as Valencia was announcing its financing needs last Friday, Spain's finance minister revealed that the economic contraction will be deeper than expected in 2013—meaning an even longer period of economic pain before Spain can hope to start generating jobs again.

For this year, the government expects a smaller contraction than previously forecast of 1.5 percent, down from a previous estimate of 1.7. However, instead of economic growth of 0.2 percent for next year, the government now forecasts a contraction of 0.5 percent.

3 BANK BAILOUT WORRIES

The concerns circling Spain's shaky banks intensified in May when Bankia, the country's fifth-largest lender, unexpectedly announced it would need €19 billion to cover its toxic property loans and assets. A month later, leaders of the other 16 countries that use the euro crafted a rescue package of up to €100 billion for Spain's banks.

Spain still hasn't put a precise figure on how much the banks will need, denying investors a clear picture of the extent of the problem and whether the €100 billion is enough to handle it. Those numbers won't start coming out until September when extensive audits and stress tests of each bank are finalized.

Friday's announcement by eurozone finance ministers that they had agreed the terms of the bailout hasn't quelled markets. That's because the government is ultimately liable to repay the loans. Europe's financial leaders agreed in principle earlier this month to eventually make loans directly to banks and take the Spanish government out of the equation. But that shift is a long way off—a pan-European banking authority would have to be created first and that could take years.

There is also concern that the rules of the bailout mean that eurozone would have to paid back first before other debt is settled. This could leave less money for private investors.

4 DEBT DEPENDENCY

The bank bailout has only made investors more worried about Spain's financial position.

Two-thirds of Spain's government bonds are held by the country's banks, pension funds and insurance companies—that's 50 percent higher than last year. This sharp increase is a sure sign that foreign demand for Spanish debt is falling fast.

Market-watchers are concerned that Spain and its banks are dependent on each other: the government is issuing debt, the majority of which is being bought by its banks, only to use the funds from the sale to prop up its banks so that they can buy more government debt.

Spain has so far this year issued €59 billion in bonds out of a total €86 billion planned for 2012. But as the banks' condition deteriorates, there is growing concern that they won't be able to buy up much more government debt.

5 GROWING PUBLIC ANGER

Since beating former Socialist Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero in the polls late last year, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has been introducing successive rounds of austerity measures aimed at preventing the country from being forced into a public finance bailout.

Rajoy's latest set of measures has been his most controversial —a steep hike in Spain's sales tax, and the elimination of one of the 14 yearly paychecks that public servants receive.

Spain has been spared the level of brutal anti-austerity street violence like that seen in Greece, but got a taste of it on July 11 after Rajoy unveiled the new round of cuts and tax rises. Spanish miners and sympathizers, incensed with the seemingly endless cutbacks and tax hikes, clashed with riot police who fired rubber bullets, injuring 22 demonstrators and 10 officers.

The miners said cuts in government mining subsidies will leave them jobless, and many Madrid residents joined in because they believe the problems that the miners face are similar to their economic woes.

Off-duty police and firefighters are starting to join in anti-austerity protests by public servants. Officers are prohibited from wearing their uniforms while protesting, but deck themselves out in white shirts to identify themselves, and the firefighters hold their helmets.

If future protests come with escalating violence, that would only make investors more nervous about Spain.

Environment

Diving into the world of marine monitoring

By NICK KOSACK
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Coral Reef intern Nick Kosack helps clean the CREWS-ICON monitoring station in Lao Lao Bay. CREWS-ICON stands for Coral Reef Early Warning System-Integrated Coral Observing Network.

Growing up on Saipan I developed a deep love for the natural world. It provides us with food, recreation, and jobs from tourists who want to come and appreciate the island's beauty. It is my belief that, both locally and globally, environmental degradation is one of the biggest threats to our health and prosperity. After I graduated college and spent some years in the work force, I felt the need to do something with my career that could make a difference and contribute to a cause that mattered to me.

I have returned to school with a new perspective, transitioning from the arts to the sciences. Currently, I am taking classes at the Minneapolis Community and Technical College where I will be getting my associate degree in biology. After that, I hope to transfer to the University of Minnesota where I will pursue a degree in Environmental Science Policy and Management with an emphasis in Conservation and Resource Management.

It is an exciting journey and the Coral Reef Internship is an invaluable part of that. The CRI program is an amazing opportunity to get hands-on learning outside the classroom and see what a career in this field would actually be like. I've had the great fortune to be accepted into the program and be placed in the Division of Environmental Quality with their Marine Monitoring Team. My mentor here, Steven Johnson, is a past intern himself and provides both scientific and technical instruction as well as perspective on how these things interact with the social and cultural context.

My primary project during the internship is collecting water quality data at the various survey sites offshore around the island. To do this, the tools I use are a YSI and a turbidimeter. The YSI has a sensor that is placed in the water and provides information about the temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen level, and salinity. The turbidimeter measures a sample and tells us how cloudy the water is. All of these measurements give us important clues as to the health of the area's seagrasses and corals. The chemistry of the water is particularly important to seagrasses and corals because, unlike fish or people, they are unable to relocate to a new area if conditions are no longer favorable or even dangerous.

Reefs can only survive within a narrow range of conditions and may start to die off with changes in the water chemistry. Keeping the reefs as healthy as possible by managing local conditions is the best and only defense we have against the global rise in ocean temperatures. These organisms are important foundations for the local ecosystem. They provide a place for fish to feed and grow and protection from the large waves created by storms.

The data that I am collecting gives us a quick snapshot and a hint of what these conditions are. However, the true value of the data is when it is combined with other data sets and multiple measurements over time. By comparing it to future measurements we can spot trends. We can find statistical correlation to find out which factors are having the biggest impact on reef health by adding it as an extra layer of information combined with measurements of coral health at the same site. Even better, we can use the data to evaluate the effectiveness of management strategies being implemented on shore. If a certain project is being done to reduce runoff the data should reflect this over time. If it doesn't, then we know that tactic is ineffective and that time, effort, and resources should be shifted to different techniques. Feedback on effective strategies reduces waste and improves our knowledge and ability to implement management practices that work well.

My time as an intern has been more than collecting water data as well. There is always something new to learn and it has been a great experience. I have also participated in reef surveys, CoralWatch events checking for coral bleaching, cleaning of the CREWS-ICON station in Lao Lao Bay, educational outreach events, discussion groups, and helping some of my fellow interns with their projects. There is no substitute for learning by doing and I've had the chance to do a variety of things. It has been a fantastic opportunity to see what science out in the field is like.

Up close and personal with coral reefs

By RONNIE CHERISE CAMACHO
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

While snorkeling in the waters near the reef off Managaha, I saw the most beautiful sight: fishes swimming around and feeding along the sea floor and among the corals. I thought it was amazing to see a scene like that while at work. My name is Ronnie Cherise Camacho and I am a recent graduate of Kagman High School. I started the Coral Reef Initiative Internship program on June 11, 2012. I was paired up with my mentor, Trey Dunn, a fisheries biologist at the Division of Fish and Wildlife, because of my interest in fisheries. I have been interested in local marine life for a long time. This led me to apply for the CRI internship program to gain first-hand experience and knowledge. I also have a desire to keep our coastal marine life thriving. I decided that the internship program would be a great opportunity to learn more and help our community.

The main goal of my internship is to assist the Fisheries Research Section of DFW with informational brochures for the public. I have chosen to create brochures about several popular fish species that live in our waters. With all the local fishermen depending on fish for food, the brochure will hopefully help them understand the biology and life cycles of some of their favorite fish. The brochures will include my research on the characteristics of each fish, including how big it gets, what it eats, where it lives, and how it is commonly caught. I look forward to including more information as I find out more. I would like to include tips for catching and preparing some of the fish too. If you would like to share any tips on how to catch or cook your favorite fish, please email me at fishtalkpacific@yahoo.com with your name, favorite fish, and tips on catching and cooking. I will include some of your tips in my project brochures.

The internship involves several other aspects as well, including discussion groups at the CRM conference room, Marine Monitoring Team lagoon surveys, and Laolao Bay re-vegetation maintenances. At our fist discussion group, we talked about coral bleaching. We were surprised to learn that corals can be greatly affected by the smallest change in temperature. After our discussion, we had a hands-on activity led by Steve McKagen using Coral Color Reference Cards and pictures of different corals. Although we have so many colors of corals, the reference card has only four colors: green, pink, orange, and brown. With the reference cards and the pictures, we had to compare the color of the coral to the color on the reference card and record the data. We also recorded the type of the coral such as branching, plate, boulder, or soft.

Our first MMT lagoon survey was at the Susupe Beach Park. Our main tools were a quadrat and a 25-meter transect line. The transect line was laid out parallel to shore. The quadrat is a PVC pipe grid that has six points in the middle. We placed the quadrat along each meter of the transect line and recorded the different species of algae found under each point. The most common algae were the *Dictyota bartayresiana* (brown algae) and *Phormidium crosbyanum* (blue-green balls). Aside from the algae, sea grass, and sand, we came across a pillow sea urchin, a few sea cucumbers, and a coral.

Our second discussion group was about fisheries. We talked about Marine Protected Areas or MPAs, larval dispersal, and how they both affect the biodiversity of the ocean. The parent fishes in an MPA disperse a significant amount of their eggs into fished areas. By doing so, they expand the biomass in fished areas as well as within the MPA. Human impacts have affected coastal marine ecosystems so the purpose of Marine Protected Areas is to conserve the population of those that live within them.

Our second MMT lagoon survey took place at Pak Pak Beach in San Antonio. There were so many algae and seagrasses around. We not only learned about the different algae there, but also about the sea cucumbers. While snorkeling, I saw so many fishes. I had to view them from a distance but it was incredible. They moved around so fast, I was fascinated just watching them go about.

We have not done the Laolao Bay re-vegetation maintenances yet and still have a few more scheduled discussion groups, as well as underwater cleanups and coral watches conducted by the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance. I'm looking forward to learning even more about our coastal marine environment!

Our work is important because we try to keep our coral reef ecosystems healthy and full of life. With the community's awareness, we could have a thriving marine ecosystem for future generations and, with fish being a primary source of food, we all need to help keep it that way. Fishing is a lifestyle here for most fishermen. The more damage we cause our corals and fishes, the less we have.

Top 5 smartphone apps to go green

By TERRI BENNETT
MCT INFORMATION SERVICES

Consider adding some apps to your smartphone to help you go green on the go. Here are my favorite apps.

1. Seafood Watch
Monterey Bay Aquarium
Price: FREE

Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch app is a user-friendly guide to sustainable seafood choices specific to your region. It also includes a useful sushi guide for making more eco-friendly choices. You can sort your seafood list by "best choice," "good alternative," or "avoid" rankings. Plus, you can add names of restaurants and stores where you've found sustainable seafood.

2. iRecycle Recycling Guide
Earth911
Price: FREE

iRecycle app helps you find a recycling facility no matter where you are or what you're looking to recycle. Just type in the name of the item such as "cookware" or "plastic bags" and you get a list of recyclers near you. Not only will you find out where to take your items you will also get easy access to the collection site's phone number, website, hours of operation, and so much more.

3. Dirty Dozen: Shopper's Guide to Pesticides
Price: FREE

The Dirty Dozen app is a simple guide to shopping for fresh, organic produce. The guide lists a dozen fruits and vegetables that contain the highest levels of pesticides. It also lists the cleanest 15 conventionally grown fruits and vegetables. This is the perfect app to help you stretch your organic budget.

4. Happy Cow
Price: $2.99

The HappyCow app is a searchable directory for vegetarian-friendly restaurants and stores in your area. There is an interactive map to help you filter by location, vegan, vegetarian, or health food stores. You can easily access directions, phone numbers, and websites. Plus, the app makes it super simple to share your finds with friends on Facebook, Twitter, instant messaging, and email.

5. EWG Sunscreen Guide
Environmental Working Group
Price: FREE

This popular sunscreen guide from the Environmental Working Group provides detailed information on sunscreen ingredients and the hazards that some pose to people and the environment. You can look up sunscreens by name to make it easy on you while you're in the sunscreen aisle. Best of all, there is a simple color-coded system to see exactly what your best bets are.

Life & Style

Feud continues to roil Michael Jackson's family

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Turmoil in Michael Jackson's family continued Tuesday as a family feud that has engulfed the singer's mother and children continued to play out in online posts, on national television and in a videotaped driveway confrontation that authorities continue to investigate.

It should perhaps be no surprise that a family that has spent decades in the spotlight is airing its troubles in public, but the dispute has left many, including estate executors, worried.

"We are concerned that we do what we can to protect them from undue influences, bullying, greed, and other unfortunate circumstances," executors John Branca and John McClain wrote in a letter posted on fan sites hours after deputies responded to a family disturbance at the hilltop home where Katherine Jackson and her three grandchildren live.

By day's end, Randy Jackson accused Branca and McClain of criminal misconduct and claimed his brother's 2002 will was a fake.

"They know that they've been caught, they know that they've falsified a document and they know that there are questions that we want answered," Randy Jackson told the Rev. Al Sharpton on Sharpton's MSNBC show. "This family is united to right a wrong."

He accused the estate of trying to keep the family's disagreements at the forefront to deflect attention away from questions about the will.

Jackson's estate has denied all claims of wrongdoing, calling questions about the will and allegations against the executors "false and defamatory accusations."

The executors hinted that further action may be taken to protect the singer's children.

"We believe measures are being put in place that will help protect them from what they are having to deal with," Branca and McClain wrote.

Michael Jackson's only daughter, Paris, has posted updates in recent days on Twitter, including her displeasure with not being allowed to speak with her grandmother for more than a week. On Tuesday, she wrote, "9 days and counting... so help me god I will make whoever did this pay."

Katherine Jackson was reported missing over the weekend but later found to be with her daughter Rebbie and other relatives in Arizona. She has not spoken to her grandchildren—Prince, Paris and Blanket—since leaving the Los Angeles area July 15.

Jackson brothers Jackie, Marlon and Tito appeared on "The Insider" Tuesday and said they also have not spoken with their mother in a week and said that was unusual.

Sheriff's spokesman Steve Whitmore said deputies continue to investigate the altercation that took place Monday afternoon, but he said there were no indications it involved the singer's children. He said the incident involved two adult males but declined to identify them further. A battery case may be presented to prosecutors, but Whitmore added that decision has not yet been made.

Randy Jackson said he and brother Jermaine and sister Janet went to the home in Calabasas on Monday to invite his brother's older children, Prince and Paris, to join their grandmother in Arizona. Security footage of the incident was obtained by "Good Morning America" and celebrity website TMZ.

Sandra Ribera, an attorney for Katherine Jackson, said authorities were called after the singer's children were accosted by relatives who followed them into their gated community in Calabasas.

"After exiting their vehicles, Jackson family members ran up to Michael's children as they yelled and began to aggressively grab at the cellphones in their hands," Ribera wrote in a statement.

Ribera claims "a plan has been in place for the last three years to remove Katherine Jackson from her home and her beloved grandchildren."

Jackson died in June 2009 at age 50 and left his estate to care for his mother and three children. He left nothing to his father or siblings, who have repeatedly tried to intervene in the estate. Several have expressed doubts about the validity of his will, but they have never mounted a formal court challenge.

Whitmore said the missing person's investigation into Katherine Jackson's whereabouts has been closed, as was an inquiry about possible elder abuse of the 82-year-old Jackson family matriarch.

He said deputies interviewed Katherine Jackson after a family business associate warned authorities that she was possibly being emotionally abused by a family member. Whitmore said the elder Jackson emphatically denied the accusations.

He said an abundance of caution has investigators still looking into claims that Katherine Jackson is the subject of financial abuse.

AP

This Jan. 26, 2012 file photo shows, from left, Prince Jackson, Blanket Jackson and Paris Jackson after a hand and footprint ceremony honoring their father musician Michael Jackson in front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles.

Damon: Public fury burns leading into election

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Matt Damon says there's a sense of fury in the U.S. over banking scandals and financial inequality that neither Democrats nor Republicans are addressing in their presidential campaigns.

The 41-year-old actor made his comments at Comic-Con in San Diego, where he was promoting the sci-fi thriller "Elysium," about a future in which the ultra-rich escape a dying Earth to live in a poverty-free, illness-free orbiting habitat. The film is set for release next March.

Damon said he expects President Obama to be elected to a second term in November but isn't as staunch a supporter as he once was.

"I'd be shocked if (Mitt) Romney won. You know, I think Obama is the clear choice. But I've said before I'm really disappointed in him, and I am, particularly because of the banking stuff. He so misread that," Damon said. "That sense of unfair—the sense that we don't have a country anymore when people don't feel like they have a chance, like it's going to be fair. ... If people feel like the deck is stacked against them, then they stop playing by the rules. Because why play by the rules? The game is fixed, right?"

Damon said both parties and the mainstream media haven't paid enough attention to groups like the Tea Party and the Occupy movement.

"I don't think the Republicans or the Democrats really understand the level of anger at the sense of unfairness that the majority of people in the country feel," he said.

The star of the "Bourne" trilogy, known for speaking out about politics in the past, pointed to a Bruce Springsteen concert he attended several months ago at Madison Square Garden. Springsteen sang a song from his new album titled "Jack of All Trades," which criticizes the gap between haves and have-nots and the greed of Wall Street bankers.

"He says: 'If I had me a gun, I'd find the bastards and shoot them on sight.' Now when he says that, when he's saying that, the place roared. I mean, roared. Like 30,000 people involuntarily screamed their approval. And it was so alarming," Damon said. "I went backstage after and saw him and it was the first thing he said to me. He's singing to firemen and cops and real people. And the fury that's there is very, very real."

Death & Funeral Announcement

JOAQUINA SANTOS AGUON

Lovingly known as "Kinai"
Born to life on June 08, 1951
Passed away in the grace of our Lord on July 19, 2012

In Her New Life, She Now Joins Her:
Mother: Maria Hocog Santos Deleon Guerrero
Father: Jose Atalig Deleon Guerrero, Jesus K. Ilo
Brother & Sisters: Serafin H. Santos, Dolores H. Santos, Georgia I. Mallens
Parents In-Law: Antonio Mafnas Aguon & Rosa Delos Santos Aguon
Brother and Sister In-Law: Juan S. Aguon, Julia & Jose A. Cepeda, Teresa R. Aguon
Reared Parents: Ignacio P./ Chana S. Agulto
Uncles & Aunties: Pedro/Rita Santos & Francisco/Innocencia Santos
Great Granddaughter: Angel Franette A. Faisao

Her Memories Will Forever Live In The Hearts of Her:
Husband: Joaquin Delos Santos Aguon
Children/Spouse: Alan Aguon and Children (Grand Children), **Antoniette** Aguon & Jen Sablan and Children (Grand Children), **Joaquin** Aguon Jr., **Tricia** Aguon & Loleng Falig and Children (Grand Children), **Edwin** Aguon & Nadine Aquino and Children, **Lana**/George Eperiam and Children, **Vincent**/Thesia Aguon and Children, **Joshua** Aguon & Margo Aldan

Uncle: Mariano/Isabel Santos and family

Brothers & Sisters: Jose Santos and Children, †Georgia Malens and Children, Elphidia Kosam and Children, Lorenza/†Likiak Monkeya and Children, Rita Fitipol and Children, Carmen Fitipol and Children

Brothers & Sisters In-Law: Mr & Mrs. Santiago S. Aguon and Children, Mr. & Mrs. Jose S. Aguon and Children, Mrs. Consolacion A. Tudela and Children, Mr. & Mrs. Ramon S. Aguon and Children, Mr. & Mrs. Dorotheo S. Aguon and Children, Mr. & Mrs. Juan S. Aguon and Children, Mr. & Mrs. Jose/Julia A. Cepeda and Children

She is also survived by and will be missed by her numerous Reared Children, In-Laws, Godchildren, Nieces, Nephews and friends.

Daily Mass is being offered at 6:00 A.M., Rosary at 7:00 P.M. at Mt. Carmel Cathedral.

On Friday, July 27, 2012 her remains will leave CHC Morgue at 7:30 A.M. and will be escorted to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral for viewing and last respects. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 A.M. followed immediately by interment services at Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

Please Join us in prayers.
Thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Joaquin S. Aguon, Children and Families

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The Dark Knight Rises

Friday and Saturday	12:45	3:55	7:00	10:05
Sunday thru Thursday	12:45	3:55	7:00	

Christian Bale, Michael Caine, Anne Hathaway
Crime, Action • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

Christopher Nolan's Batman franchise continues with this Warner Bros. release, the third in the series. The story will pick up after the events of The Dark Knight, with Christian Bale returning as the Caped Crusader—this time pitted against the deadly Bane (Tom Hardy) and Selina Kyle, aka Catwoman (Anne Hathaway). Nolan directs from a script he co-wrote with his brother, Jonathan, working off the story by David Goyer. Joseph Gordon-Levitt co-stars.

The Dark Knight Rises

Friday and Saturday	12:55	4:05	7:10	10:15
Sunday thru Thursday	12:55	4:05	7:10	

Christian Bale, Michael Caine, Anne Hathaway
Crime, Action • Rated PG 13

★ ★ ★

Ice Age 4: Continental Drift

Friday and Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15	9:30
Sunday thru Thursday	1:15	4:15	7:15	

Ray Romano, John Leguizamo
Children's/family • Rated PG

Synopsis

The Ice Age franchise continues with this 3D entry in the highly successful series. Ray Romano, John Leguizamo, Queen Latifah, Denis Leary, Seann William Scott, and Josh Peck reprise their roles, with Jeremy Renner, Jennifer Lopez, and Aziz Ansari heading up the rest of the voice cast.

Savages

Friday and Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:20	10:10
Sunday thru Thursday	1:00	4:00	7:20	

Taylor Kitsch, Salma Hayek
Crime • Rated R

The Amazing Spider-Man

Friday and Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:05	9:55
Sunday thru Thursday	1:10	4:10	7:05	

Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone
Action, Fantasy, Drama • Rated PG 13

Ted

Friday and Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25	9:50
Sunday thru Thursday	1:25	4:25	7:25	

Mark Wahlberg, Mila Kunis
Comedy • Rated R

Brave

Friday and Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:30	10:00
Sunday thru Thursday	1:30	4:30	7:30	

Kelly MacDonald, Emma Thompson
Children's/family • Rated PG

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Batman star Christian Bale visits shooting victims

AURORA, Colo. (AP)—Batman star Christian Bale visited survivors of the Colorado theater shooting Tuesday, and thanked medical staff and police officers who responded to the attack that killed 12 people and injured 58 others.

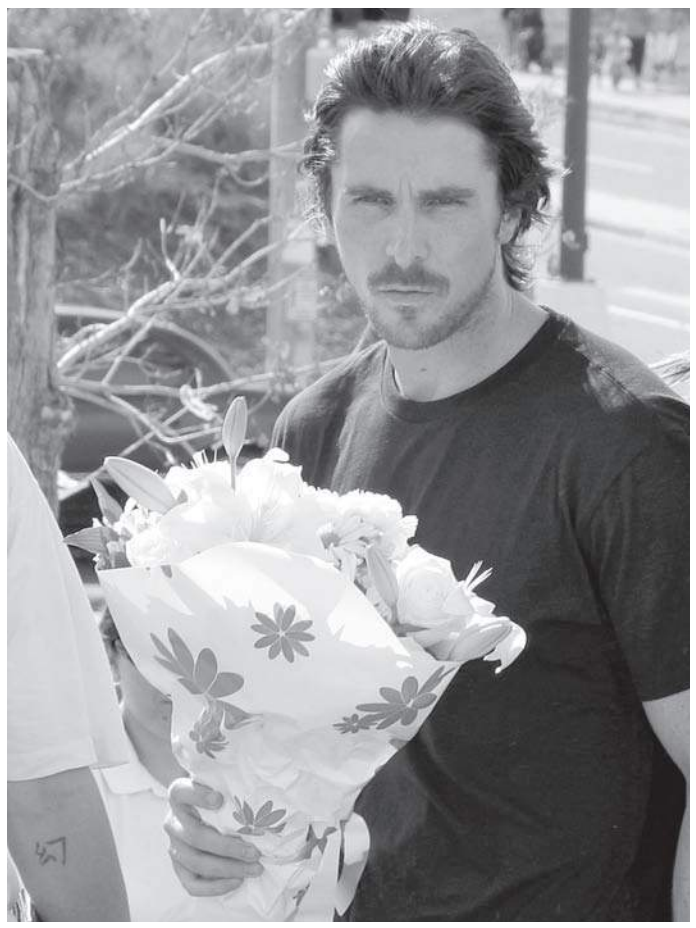
Bale visited with little advance warning and also stopped by a makeshift memorial to victims near the movie theater that was showing "The Dark Knight Rises" when the gunfire erupted.

Carey Rottman, one of those injured in Friday's shooting, posted two photos of himself with Bale on his Facebook page.

Janie Bowman-Hayes, assistant vice president of surgical services at sister hospital Swedish Medical Center, said she and co-workers were attending a luncheon at The Medical Center of Aurora to thank staff who tended to victims. "When we got there, then we found out he was there," she said.

Bale, humble and dressed casually in a black T-shirt and jeans, thanked the staff, shook hands and agreed to have his photo taken with employees, Bowman-Hayes said.

"He just said he wanted to come to thank all of us because he has been thinking about this. He knows the whole world has been thinking about this," she said. "He took it upon himself to come and thank us."



AP

Actor Christian Bale carries flowers as he visits a memorial to the victims of Friday's mass shooting, Tuesday, July 24, 2012, in Aurora, Colo.

An online campaign had urged Bale to visit survivors of the shooting.

Bale also stopped by a growing memorial near the theater and walked among the 12 crosses erected for each of the slain victims. Many people there didn't realize who he was or chose to leave him alone.

A Warner Bros. spokeswoman told *The Denver Post* that Bale was representing himself, not the movie studio.

Bale, who stars as Batman in "The Dark Knight Rises," previously issued a written statement saying: "Words cannot express the horror that I feel. I cannot begin to truly understand the pain and grief of the victims and their loved ones, but my heart goes out to them."

President Barack Obama and members of the Denver Broncos also have made hospital visits to some of the survivors.

Bowman-Hayes and her staff cared for patients at both Swedish Medical Center and The Medical Center of Aurora after the shootings, whether it was in the operating room or intensive care unit, or by washing medical instruments.

She said the staff appreciated Bale's visit.

"He did this out of his heart, and you could really tell. It was so sincere," she said. "It was just, `thank you.'"

Life sentence in Jennifer Hudson family slayings

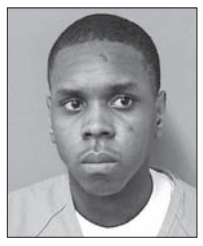
CHICAGO (AP)—Struggling to contain his anger, a Chicago judge on Tuesday sentenced Oscar-winner Jennifer Hudson's former brother-in-law to life in prison for killing her mother, brother and 7-year-old nephew in what prosecutors say was a fit of jealous rage.

In blistering comments, Cook County Circuit Judge Charles Burns rejected William Balfour's claims that he was innocent of the crimes.

"You have the heart of an arctic night," Burns told Balfour. "Your soul is as barren as dark space."

Balfour was convicted in May of first-degree murder in the 2008 shooting deaths of Hudson's 57-year-old mother, Darnell Donerson; her 29-year-old brother, Jason Hudson; and her 7-year-old nephew, Julian King.

During the trial, prosecutors portrayed Balfour, who was married to Hudson's sister, Julia Hudson, as a jealous estranged husband who often stalked the Hudson family home after he moved out in early 2008. Balfour's attorneys suggested someone else committed a crime in the family's three-story house in the Englewood neighborhood on Chicago's South Side.



Balfour

Burns' harshest comments Tuesday came in regards to Julian's death. The judge's voice cracked as he recounted how terrified the child must have been in the second before he was shot twice in the head.

"I have no doubt in my mind he looked to you when you put bullets in his head," the judge said.

Hudson, who attended every day of Balfour's trial earlier this year, sat next to her sister and dabbed her eyes with a tissue a couple of times during the hearing, including the 10 minutes in which Burns put his own anger into words. She did not make a statement to the judge and left the courtroom without commenting.

Balfour offered his condolences to the Hudson family while maintaining that he didn't kill their relatives.

"My deepest prayers goes out to Julian King. I loved him. I still love him," he said. "I'm innocent, your honor."

Burns, however, said he had no doubt "whatsoever" that Balfour committed the crimes, including the shooting of a little boy "just because he was there."

"I don't think you have one ounce of remorse in your soul; I really don't," Burns said.

Illinois does not have the death penalty, and Balfour faced a mandatory life sentence. The judge sentenced Balfour to three terms of life in prison plus 120 years on other charges, a largely symbolic move but one that underlined the judge's feelings.

The killings occurred the morning after Julia Hudson's birthday, and prosecutors said he became enraged when he stopped by the home and saw a gift of balloons in the house from her new boyfriend.

After his estranged wife left for work on the morning of Oct. 24, 2008, prosecutors said Balfour went back inside the home with a .45-caliber handgun and shot Hudson's mother. He then allegedly shot Hudson's brother twice in the head as he lay in bed.

OBITUARIES

'Medical Center' star Chad Everett dies at 75

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Chad Everett, the blue-eyed star of the 1970s TV series "Medical Center" who went on to appear in such films and TV shows as "Mulholland Drive" and "Melrose Place," has died. He was 75. Everett's daughter, Katherine Thorp, said he died Tuesday at his home in Los Angeles after a year-and-a-half-long battle with lung cancer. Everett played sensitive doctor Joe Gannon for seven years on "Medical Center." The role earned him two Golden Globes and an Emmy nomination. Everett is survived by his two daughters, Katherine and Shannon, and six grandchildren. He was married to actress Shelby Grant for 45 years until her death last year.

Oscar-winning screenwriter Frank Pierson dies

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Oscar-winning screenwriter of "Dog Day Afternoon" and "Cool Hand Luke" has died. Frank Pierson's family says he died of natural causes Monday in Los Angeles after a short illness. He was 87. He won an Oscar for writing 1975's "Dog Day Afternoon" and was nominated for his screenplays for "Cool Hand Luke" and "Cat Ballou." He wrote and directed 1976's "A Star is Born." Perhaps Pierson's most famous line was for "Cool Hand Luke": "What we've got here is failure to communicate." He is survived by his wife, two children and five grandchildren.

Sherman Hemsley of TV's "The Jeffersons" dies

EL PASO, Texas (AP)—George Jefferson was a bigot. A loudmouth. Rude. Obsessed with money. Arrogant. And yet he was one of the most enjoyable, beloved characters in television history. Much of that credit belongs to Sherman Hemsley, the gifted character actor who gave life to the blustering black Harlem businessman on "The Jeffersons," one of TV's longest running and most successful sitcoms—particularly noteworthy with its mostly black cast. The Philadelphia-born Hemsley, who police said late Tuesday died at his home in El Paso, Texas, at age 74, first played George Jefferson on CBS's "All in the Family" before he was spun off onto "The Jeffersons." The sitcom ran for 11 seasons from 1975 to 1985.

Osbourne tweets: done with 'America's Got Talent'

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—Sharon Osbourne said Tuesday that she's ready to say goodbye to NBC's "America's Got Talent," taking the network by surprise.

In a posting on Twitter, Osbourne addressed "my darling" fellow judge Howard Stern and said, "money is not the reason I'm not returning" to the show. Her tweet trailed off with "it's because ...." and didn't elaborate.

Her message was unexpected, NBC Entertainment Chairman Robert Greenblatt told a meeting Tuesday of the Television Critics Association.

Osbourne

"This is coming out of context and sort of spontaneously, and we don't even know what's going on. And it's probably much ado about nothing," Greenblatt said, declining to comment further.

Osbourne has a multi-year contract with the series, said a person familiar with the production. The person, who lacked authority to discuss the issue publicly, spoke on condition of anonymity.

"America's Got Talent," which is now airing its seventh season, added Stern to the judges' panel this year and moved the production from Los Angeles to New York to accommodate him. Howie Mandel is the show's third judge.

Osbourne's representative did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The tweet from Osbourne, co-host of "The Talk" and wife of rocker Ozzy Osbourne, appeared to refer to one posted Monday on the account for shock jock Stern's radio show.

Stern "isn't sure if he'll do another season and says Sharon Osbourne may not come back unless she gets more money," the tweet read.

Asked whether Stern intended to stay with the show, Don Buchwald, his agent, responded by email that "we do not respond to inquiries of this sort."

Earlier Tuesday, Paul Telegdy, NBC entertainment president of alternative programming, told the critics' meeting that he was "thrilled" with Stern.

Looking beyond this season, Telegdy added, "We'd be delighted if Howard wants to come back."

Cast of 'Modern Family' sues over contract

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Five stars of "Modern Family" have banded together and are suing to void their contracts to work on the hit comedy, arguing that the contracts are illegal under California law.

The suit filed Tuesday by series stars Sofia Vergara, Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Eric Stonestreet, Julie Bowen and Ty Burrell and argues that their contracts with 20th Century Fox Television violate a California law prohibiting personal service contracts from extending for more than seven years.

The lawsuit asks a judge to rule the contracts are illegal and should be voided because they prohibit the actors from other work. The lawsuit states the contracts bind the actors to work on the series from February 2009 and June 30, 2016.

"'Modern Family' has been a breakout critical and financial success," the lawsuit states. "That success, however, has been built upon a collection of illegal contracts."

A spokeswoman for 20th Century Fox said the studio had no immediate comment on the case.

AP

This Sept. 18, 2011 file photo shows Ty Burrell, left, Julie Bowen from the television series "Modern Family" holding their Emmys for best supporting and actress actress in a comedy, backstage at the 63rd Primetime Emmy Awards in Los Angeles.

The lawsuit also states contracts cap the raises the actors receive for each additional season of the show—Vergara's pay raise per season is capped at five percent, while the rest of her co-stars named in the suit are allowed to receive a maximum pay increase of four percent per year. Ferguson, Stonestreet, Bowen and Burrell are also required to perform numerous unpaid publicity obligations.

George W. Bush speaks at Mass. convention

BOSTON (AP)—Former President George W. Bush talked about his memoirs but made no references to Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney during a speech at the Global Business Travel Association's annual convention in Boston.

Bush addressed more than 6,500 airline, hotel and other travel industry professionals on Tuesday.

Bush said he doesn't think former presidents should undermine current presidents. He also said he was trying to reclaim his anonymity and doesn't want to be in the press anymore.

The 43rd president referred several times to his 2010 book, "Decision Points," which came out in paperback last fall. He also talked about his struggles with alcohol, growing up in West Texas and the importance of public service.

LA County voters to cast ballot on condoms in porn

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Los Angeles County officials have approved a ballot initiative that will ask voters to decide whether porn actors should be required to wear condoms in sex scenes.

The Board of Supervisors voted 3-1 Tuesday to ask voters whether to require adult filmmakers to get health permits from the county for film production.

The initiative is backed by AIDS Healthcare Foundation, and spokeswoman Lori Yeghiayan (yeg-ee-EYE-an) says condom use is one condition of getting the permits.

Porn producers would pay a fee to get permits, and the funds would be used to pay enforcement costs.

The city passed an ordinance earlier this year requiring condoms to be used in any porn that is granted a filming permit.

More than 371,000 signatures were gathered to get the initiative on November's ballot.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

'Poker princess' Molly Bloom has memoir deal

NEW YORK (AP)—Molly Bloom, who ran high-stakes, exclusive poker games involving some of Hollywood's biggest names, playboys and sports stars, will have a memoir coming out next year. It Books, a division of HarperCollins, announced Tuesday that Bloom's book is tentatively scheduled for publication in the summer of 2014. The book is not yet titled. The publisher says the book will take readers inside the poker matches that Bloom ran in New York, Los Angeles, Miami and Las Vegas "until it all came crashing down around her." Bloom says in a statement that for seven years she "reigned supreme" over the secret world of underground, high-stakes poker. She was named along with "Spider-Man" star Tobey Maguire and other celebrities in a web of lawsuits seeking to reclaim more than $4 million won during unlicensed poker matches.

NBC to take a big bite out of Dracula classic

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—NBC is sinking its teeth into the classic tale of Dracula for a new drama series. The network announced Tuesday a 10-episode version of the Bram Stoker novel. Jonathan Rhys Meyers has the title role as the vampire set in Victorian-era England. Meyers is known for starring in the Showtime series "The Tudors," and for the TV film "Elvis." "Dracula" is from the producers behind the acclaimed hit "Downton Abbey," Carnival Films & Television. It will begin production later this year, NBC said. The announcement was made at the Television Critics Association conference. NBC did not announce an airdate for "Dracula."

Broadway's 'Ghost The Musical' to close next month

NEW YORK (AP)—The musical based on the 1990 film "Ghost" won't be haunting Broadway for long. Producers said Tuesday that "Ghost The Musical" will play its final performance at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre on Aug. 18. It will have lasted 39 previews and 136 regular performances. The musical is based on the hit movie in which Patrick Swayze played a ghost trying to communicate with his girlfriend—played by Demi Moore—through a fake psychic—played by Whoopi Goldberg—in hopes of saving her from his murderer. Despite the closing, the musical is still playing in London and a national tour is set to launch in the fall of 2013. Productions also are planned for Korea, Germany, Sweden, Hungary, Japan, China and Australia.

Traveling with a stranger is risky way to save money

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am planning a trip to Thailand next year and would like to find a traveling partner. I don't care whether the person is male or female. My plan is to visit the country and rent a cabin for a month. My interest is solely to share expenses and have a platonic relationship with my travelmate because going alone is very expensive. Thanks for whatever input you can give me.

TRAVELER FROM KANSAS CITY

DEAR TRAVELER: You're welcome. My "input" is to urge you to rethink this. I do NOT recommend that you go to a foreign country and rent a cabin in the middle of nowhere with someone you don't know because it could be dangerous. What if there is a medical emergency or your companion has misrepresented him—or herself?

Traveling, even with someone you DO know, can present problems unless you have a high degree of compatibility and similar habits. Low-budget tours are available, and I urge you to research them.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: A few weeks ago my husband and I were having an argument. He stormed out of the house and was killed in a wreck while talking to his brother on his cellphone.

His family blames me for arguing with him. While I feel sad that the last thing we did was argue, I feel his brother should shoulder some of the blame because he was on the cellphone with him, which is illegal in our state.

Luckily, no one else was hurt in the crash, but I am very hurt that "John's" family is so angry at me. Please remind folks not to drive while on a cellphone.

IDAHO WIDOW

DEAR WIDOW: Please accept my sympathy for the tragic loss of your husband. It is important you understand that your former in-laws are angry at the fact that he is dead, and are looking for someone other than him to blame for their pain. If your brother-in-law knew John was on his cellphone while driving, then I'm sure he carries some guilt about it. But the fault lies with your husband, rest his angry soul.

P.S. If your letter serves as a reminder to readers not to use a cellphone—or text—while driving, his death will not have been in vain.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am dating a recently divorced man who was married to a very controlling woman for 31 years. I love him very much and see myself with him in the future. However, at the age of 53, he is interested in pursuing a singing career.

I dated a musician for 16 years and I do not want a relationship with another one. I'm pretending to be supportive because I don't want to be another woman telling him what to do or stifling his dreams. Inside I am dreading it. I become physically ill when I think of losing another man to music.

On the other hand, I can't imagine my life without him. Should I continue to pretend to support him and hope he fails, or let him know that I don't want to be with a musician?

OUT OF TUNE IN DAYTON, OHIO

DEAR OUT OF TUNE: It is in neither of your best interests for you to continue lying to him because the truth will come to light eventually. He is not the person you dated for 16 years, so let him pursue his dream. The odds of a 53-year-old man becoming an overnight national sensation are long, but after 31 years of misery with his ex, if he can enjoy some success on the local level, please don't begrudge him.

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

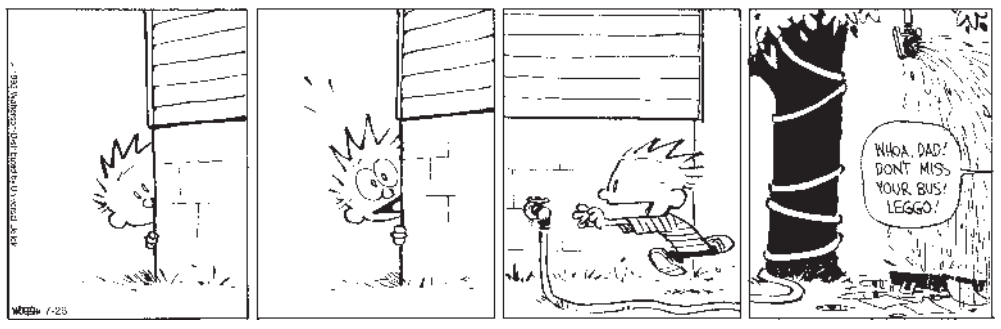
■■■

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

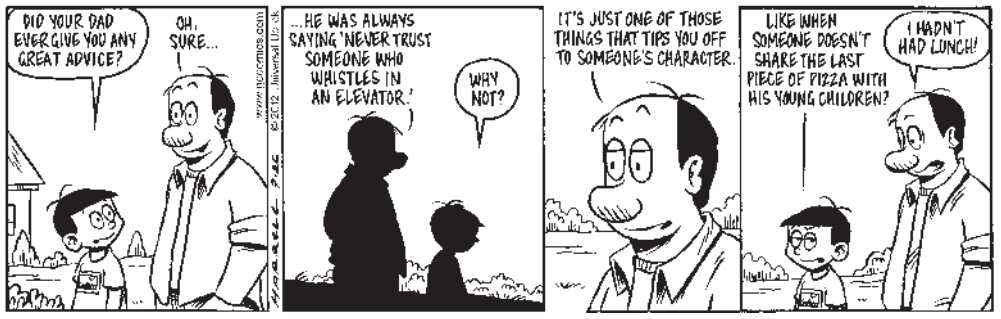


Garfield®

By Jim Davis

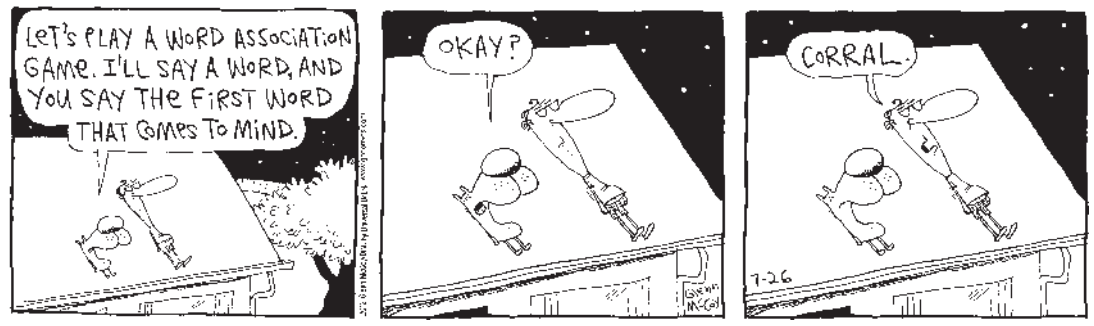
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


DID YOUR DAD EVER GIVE YOU ANY GREAT ADVICE?
OH, SURE...
...HE WAS ALWAYS SAYING 'NEVER TRUST SOMEONE WHO WHISTLES IN AN ELEVATOR.'
WHY NOT?
IT'S JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT TIPS YOU OFF TO SOMEONE'S CHARACTER.
LIKE WHEN SOMEONE DOESN'T SHARE THE LAST PIECE OF PIZZA WITH HIS YOUNG CHILDREN?
I HADN'T HAD LUNCH!

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Campus mil. program
5 Stein or Stiller
8 Carpet style
12 Vicinity
13 George's brother
14 Mimicking bird
15 Tide type
16 Cookie holder
17 Leave out
18 Singer Fats
20 Snatch
22 Orange-flowered impatiens
26 Shade
29 Meadow
30 Biblical verb suffix
31 Hebrew month
32 Carton
33 Destiny
34 Veto
35 Piglet's mama
36 Metallic mixture
37 Unpredictable
40 Sunbeams
41 Royal attendant
45 Clone
47 Heavy weight
49 Queen of Carthage
50 Molt
51 Away from WSW
52 Cupid's alias
53 Bouquet
54 Two, in Tijuana
55 Medicinal amount

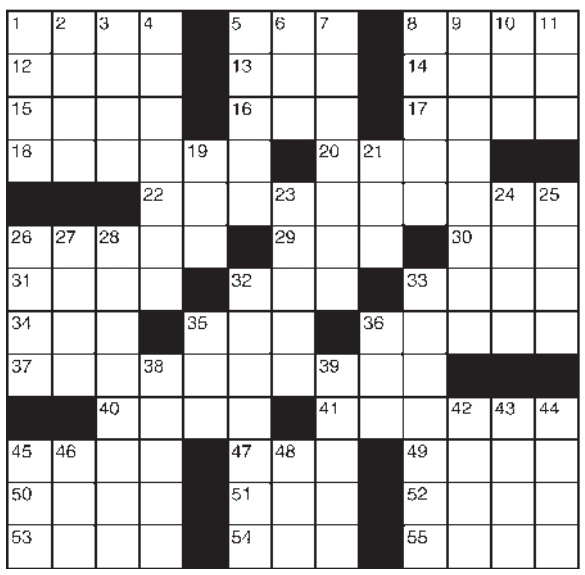
DOWN

1 McNally's partner
2 Sandwich treat
3 Squad
4 Domed landmark
5 Delicate ornament
6 Historic time
7 Access to a nave
8 Fire sign?
9 Wedding-related
10 Blackbird
11 "Roscoe"
19 Neither partner
21 "I — Camera"
23 Emmett Kelly, for one
24 "Beetle Bailey" dog
25 Yon folks
26 Minimal change
27 Hodgepodge
28 Nonessential comforts
32 Bragged
33 Inundated
35 Bashful
36 Candle count
38 Halloween bagful
39 Units of force
42 Muralist Joan
43 Commotions
44 Schnozz
45 Recipe meas.
46 Personal question?
48 Lennon's lady

Solution time: 25 mins.

		L	A	W			P	A	M			
	C	L	U	E			E	U	R	O	S	
F	L	O	R	A			T	R	A	U	M	A
O	A	Y	A	T	T	H	E	B	E	A	C	H
A	D	D		H	A	Y	E	S		R	H	O
			B	E	L	L			S	T	E	W
	S	H	I	R	K		G	A	U	S	S	
S	I	A	G				R	U	B	E		
A	R	M		G	U	F	S	S		P	O	F
W	A	L	K	I	N	T	H	E	P	A	R	K
	W	E	I	M	A	R		N	U	R	S	E
		T	E	M	P	O		C	L	I	O	
			V	E	T			E	L	S		

Yesterday's answer 7-26



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute. touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kate Beckinsale, 39; Sandra Bullock, 48; Kevin Spacey, 53; Helen Mirren, 67.

Happy Birthday: Be careful what you wish for. Someone who exaggerates will try to lead you astray. Uncover the facts before you follow a path to a dead end or loss. Change your plans or your direction if you don't feel secure with what others are doing. Don't let your emotions overrule what must be done. Your numbers are 7, 12, 24, 28, 33, 37, 44.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You won't need to be aggressive to get your way. Doing your part to make things happen is all that's required. The interest you show in someone will be reciprocated. Network, socialize and enjoy people who share your humor and interests. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't allow situations to fester or emotional matters to be drawn out. Take care of a problem before it has the chance to develop into a full-fledged disagreement. Focus on creative solutions that will ease stress for everyone involved. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Consider the difference between the way you do things and the way others approach similar situations. A change of plans will help you get back on track and renew some of the interest someone used to have in you. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You will attract a lot of attention. Don't give anyone reason to point out your shortcomings or damage your reputation. Focus on creative projects that allow you to show off. An older or younger person will add to your responsibilities. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Spread your talent around. Offer help, suggestions and experience, but don't argue with someone you are connected to personally or emotionally. Creative changes at home or in the way you handle money must be considered carefully. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Don't allow someone from your past to ruin your day. Focus on the here and now and what's ahead in the future. Living in the past will only hold you back. Someone quite different from you will catch your interest. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Consider all your interests and the places you want visit, and you will come up with an educational and fun plan that will lead to newfound friends and potential partnerships. Live, love and laugh, and enjoy whatever comes your way. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Emotions will surface. Finding out where you stand may not be what you want to hear initially, but in the end you will discover you are the beneficiary of something much bigger and better. Share ideas with someone you respect. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Check out all your options, but go for the one that promises to put the most cash in your hands. A partnership that offers equality and strength will help you push your way to the top, personally and professionally. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Impulse is the enemy. Listen carefully to what others say, and keep close tabs on the people you are in partnership with both personally and professionally. Take an unexpected approach to what you do and you will confuse your competition. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Emotional matters will lead to confusion. If something doesn't seem right, ask questions until you get an answer. A relationship will become better once you've established how to allocate responsibilities. Strive for equality. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Handle your personal paperwork and finances in an unorthodox manner to end up with additional funds. An opportunity to pick up secret information will help you make a decision that can help you advance. Don't mix business with pleasure. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, original and intuitive. You are possessive and passionate.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8			1		9		
								5
2			3		6			
		3		6		1		
1			2		7			3
		5		9		7		
			4		8			7
7								
		1		5			2	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 7/26

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	7	2	6	3	5	8	4	9
6	5	4	8	9	2	1	3	7
3	8	9	4	7	1	5	2	6
7	4	6	1	2	8	3	9	5
2	9	3	7	5	6	4	1	8
8	1	5	9	4	3	6	7	2
5	2	7	3	8	4	9	6	1
9	3	1	5	6	7	2	8	4
4	6	8	2	1	9	7	5	3

Difficulty Level ★★★ 7/25

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

AUNTS AND UNCLES DAY **Solution: 6 letters**

R	C	N	R	H	A	T	T	E	N	D	J	S	G	S
C	E	O	E	D	O	O	S	M	E	O	P	N	P	R
S	L	L	U	P	Y	L	G	U	Y	E	I	E	R	E
E	P	O	A	S	H	N	I	S	N	L	C	F	E	T
L	R	O	T	T	I	E	T	D	B	I	R	I	H	T
P	I	I	I	H	I	N	W	I	A	E	Q	G	C	I
M	M	S	S	L	E	O	S	L	H	Y	N	U	A	S
E	O	I	T	V	M	S	N	T	E	I	S	R	E	Y
M	F	F	E	E	I	E	O	S	D	D	A	E	Ⓣ	B
O	F	H	N	S	N	R	N	A	H	D	O	Ⓕ	A	A
R	E	R	T	N	B	E	E	T	M	I	Ⓘ	M	Y	B
I	R	E	I	L	I	R	R	I	O	Ⓖ	P	E	M	E
E	R	E	O	E	A	C	R	S	I	R	N	S	L	S
S	C	O	O	K	N	E	E	C	L	O	S	E	Y	T
E	D	E	C	N	A	D	H	O	M	E	W	O	R	K

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Admire, Attend, Babysitters, Best, Blood, Brother, Close, Clothes, Cook, Cousins, Dance, Events, Figure, Fishing, Friend, Gift, Health, Holidays, Homework, Joys, Listeners, Memories, Mentors, Model, Money, Nephew, Nice, Niece, Offer, Poems, Proud, Reading, Relationships, Role, Sibling, Sister, Special, Spend, Spoil, Teacher, Time, Toys, Unique, Women

Yesterday's Answer: Headphones

To order THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 24, 28, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 or 36 (at $6.95 each, US funds only, payable to Universal Uclick) plus $3 postage for the first book (add $1 each additional book), send to WONDERWORD, 1130 Walnut, St., Kansas City, MO 64105 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480. Order online at puzzles.com. Allow 4-6 weeks, allow an extra week for 20 or 30 sets.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Ocean View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. $600/mo. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Sunset View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. $550. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Lower Navy Hill Apts. Newly renovated bldg., 3BR & 2BTH. Rooms w/ A/C & fully furnished. Back-up generator. Free Wi-Fi, EPA Solar Water Heater. Laundry area. Nightime security. $450/mo. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Close to NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Pls. visit our website www.saipan-properties.com. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

SANDY BEACH HOMES Energy efficient 3BR, 2BTH beachfront Chalan Kanoa. Security cams, back-up power/water, washer/dryer in unit, AC, solar water heater. Income eligibility req. apply. $695. 235-7263. www.sandybeachhomes.

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EMPLOYMENT

JTS Distribution is looking for (1) Graphic Artist with a Four year Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts. Must have at least 5 years experience. Call Joe or April at 789-7575.

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Saipan Tribune
235-6397

FIESTA Resort & SPA SAIPAN
A Tan Holdings Company

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) Accounting Manager
Supervises the following sections in Finance: General Accounting, Purchasing, Cost Accounting and Income Audit. Primarily responsible for maintaining an efficient and effective accounting system that would respond readily to the needs of internal and external users of financial information. Minimum of 5 years progressive management experience in accounting operations. Strong analytical skill and problem solving. Proficient in Accounting Software, SAP R3 FICO system. Expertise with MS Excel, Word and Power Point is required. Must be able to work under pressure of completing deadlines and will to work flexible hours including holidays and week ends.

(1) Maintenance Manager
Qualifications: Minimum 6 years work experience as Manager of engineering department, preferably in a hotel. Assists the Chief Engineer in ensuring the efficient and economic operation of the engineering department in support of all other operating departments, supplying services as required to the entire operation, and maintaining equipment, building and grounds in optimum condition. Good problem solving, administrative and interpersonal skills are required. Must be able to work "on-call" seven (7) days a week, including holidays.

Applications may be obtained from Fiesta Resort's security office located on the South Wing. Closing date for applications to be submitted and considered is July 28th.

Kanoa Resort
Saipan

P.O Box 500369 Saipan MP 96950 • Tel # (670) 234-6601 Fax # (670) 234-8007

(1) ELECTRICIAN

Qualifications: Minimum of 5 years work experience and training. High school graduate or equivalent. Able to service, repair, calibrate, regulate, fine-tune or test machines, devices and equipment that operate primarily on electrical or electronic principles. Must to work in a flexible way that allows for changes in assignments and priorities depending upon identified needs of the department.

Interested applicants may email resume to joe_ada@saipan-grandhotel.com. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

Kanoa Resort , is located next to Saipan World Resort Beach Road , Susupe , Saipan , and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 6-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $27 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$27
• 5-Liner	$24	$39
• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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Over 100 food stamp vouchers on hold
Businesses slam "excessive" $500 fire re-inspection, $500 permit fees
Opinion
Even despots don't live forever
The flagrance of war
Focus
More US Catholics take complaints to church court
Campus Life
KagHS JROTC does well in drill competiti
GCA's January forensic winners

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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

DIFFE RENCE

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Find today's solution in classified section

Nationals end Dickey's streak, beat Mets

NEW YORK (AP) ó The Washington Nationals handed New York pitching ace R.A. Dickey his first loss in nearly three months by beating the Mets 5-2 in the National League on Tuesday.

Dickey (13-2) allowed five consecutive hits in the sixth, ending his 11-game winning streak, as the Mets lost their 11th in 12 games. Their lone victory during that skid was over the Nationals.

Washington's Adam LaRoche hit a tiebreaking homer and Gio Gonzalez (13-5) did not allow an earned run in seven innings as the NL-leading Nationals notched a fourth-straight win.

AP

Washington Nationals starting pitcher Gio Gonzalez (47) throws against the New York Mets in the first inning of a baseball game, Tuesday, July 24, 2012, at Citi Field in New York.

Diamondbacks 6, Rockies 2

In Phoenix, Colorado Rockies manager Jim Tracy was succinct in his appraisal of his team's performance Tuesday night.

"We didn't pitch very well tonight and we didn't hit," Tracy said after the Rockies' 6-2 loss to the Arizona Diamondbacks. "You get three hits, the first baseman hits two solo home runs and you get a base hit from (a reliever), you are not going to win too many games that way.

"And you're not going to win too many games leaving balls up in the strike zone the way we did. We didn't command the ball very well."

Giants 3, Padres 2

In San Francisco, whatever momentum San Diego built during its best homestand of the season has quickly vanished in the span of two nights.

Not even a second straight solid outing from Edinson Volquez could keep the Padres from losing this one.

Reliever Joe Thatcher allowed a walk and two hits in the ninth inning, including Brandon Crawford's game-winner that lifted the San Francisco Giants to a 3-2 victory Tuesday night.

Cardinals 8, Dodgers 2

In St. Louis, pitcher Adam Wainwright got his first two RBIs of the season to help St. Louis beat Los Angeles.

On the mound, Wainwright (8-10) allowed two runs with seven strikeouts in 7 1-3 innings.

His performance with the bat was more surprising. He was batting .079 (3-for-38) with just three singles and 17 strikeouts this season.

But he doubled with two outs in the fifth for St. Louis' first run, then scored the tying run on Rafael Furcal's single. After an intentional walk loaded the bases in the sixth,

Braves 4, Marlins 3

In Miami, Tim Hudson pitched seven innings to guide Atlanta to a tight win over Miami.

After conceding a home run in the second inning, Hudson (9-4) retired 16 straight before he was relieved. He allowed five hits.

Jason Heyward broke a 3-3 tie in the seventh inning with an RBI single off Wade LeBlanc (1-1) that scored Martin Prado, who tripled to lead off the inning.

Craig Kimbrel pitched the ninth for his 29th save in 30 chances.

Cubs 5, Pirates 1

In Pittsburgh, Paul Maholm pitched eight strong innings against his old team to win his fifth straight start as Chicago downed Pittsburgh.

Maholm gave up one run in handing the Pittsburgh its first consecutive home losses since May. He struck out seven and walked one.

Maholm (9-6) has allowed just four earned runs in 38 1-3 innings during his winning streak for a 0.94 ERA in that span.

Reds 4, Astros 2

In Houston, Drew Stubbs hit a go-ahead homer and Cincinnati rallied for three runs in the ninth inning against former teammate Francisco Cordero, beating Houston.

The NL Central-leading Reds have won six in a row while the Astros have lost eight straight.

Cordero (3-6) got his first Astros save chance since being acquired in a trade with Toronto last week. Stubbs hit a two-run homer for a 3-2 lead and Xavier Paul added an RBI single.

Reds starter Mike Leake (4-6) conceded only two runs over eight innings.

Phillies 7, Brewers 6

In Philadelphia, Hunter Pence singled in the go-ahead run after Carlos Ruiz hit a tying, three-run double as Philadelphia rallied with six runs in the eighth inning to overwhelm Milwaukee.

This came a night after the Phillies had scored four runs in the ninth to beat Milwaukee by the same score.

Eric Kratz got the Phillies started in the eighth with a two-run homer to cut it to 6-3. Shane Victorino, Chase Utley and Ryan Howard worked consecutive two-out walks to load the bases.

Red Sox 2, Rangers 1

In Arlington, Boston's Mike Aviles blooped a tiebreaking single in the ninth inning to give the Red Sox a 2-1 win over the Texas Rangers in the American League on Tuesday, ending a four-game losing streak.

Rangers closer Joe Nathan (1-3) issued a pair of two-out walks in the ninth and Aviles singled just beyond the reach of shortstop Elvis Andrus.

Red Sox reliever Vicente Padilla (4-0) escaped a first-and-third jam in the eighth. He hit

Indians 3, Tigers 2

In Cleveland, Aaron Cunningham drove in the go-ahead run with a suicide squeeze in the seventh inning, giving Cleveland victory over Detroit.

Travis Hafner tripled with one out in the seventh inning off Doug Fister (4-7) and Lou Marson ran for him.

Marson took off running as Cunningham dropped a bunt in front of the plate. Fister quickly got the ball and tried to shovel it to catcher Alex Avila. It rolled away, Marson scored, and Cunningham took second on the error.

Rays 3, Orioles 1

In Baltimore, Tampa Bay starter Jeremy Hellickson held Baltimore scoreless into the seventh inning to earn his first win in 10 starts.

Hellickson (5-6) was 0-6 since beating Boston on May 16, although he allowed more than three earned runs only once during his losing streak

The light-hitting Brooks Conrad hit a homer for the Rays, who were playing their first road game since the All-Star break.

Athletics 7, Blue Jays 2

In Toronto, Yoenis Cespedes hit a three-run single as streaking Oakland beat Toronto for its season-best sixth win in a row.

The A's are 15-2 in July, and are now eight games over .500 for the first time in four years.

Oakland starter Travis Blackley (3-2) allowed one run in seven innings. He struck out a career-best eight.

Toronto's Brett Cecil (2-3) has won just once in his past six starts. The Blue Jays had won three straight.

Mariners 4, Yankees 2

In Seattle, even as Alex Rodriguez writhed on the ground in pain, he didn't believe his left hand was fractured.

Turns out A-Rod was wrong, and now the Yankees will be without another of their star players.

"It's difficult. Tough break," Rodriguez said in almost a hushed tone after New York lost to the Seattle Mariners 4-2 Tuesday night.

Rodriguez broke his hand when he was hit by an 88 mph changeup from Felix Hernandez in the eighth inning. He went down in considerable pain.

White Sox 11, Twins 4

In Chicago, Adam Dunn hit his major league-leading 30th homer of the season and a two-run double as Chicago rallied past Minnesota.

Nate Jones (4-0), who relieved Chicago starter Jose Quintana in the seventh, got the win.

Minnesota's Casey Fien (1-1) took the loss.

Coaches to recruit Penn State players

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP)--Penn State's players won't be returning to their senior proms or taking the SAT and ACT again, but they're going to get a chance to relive at least one crucial part of their high school experience.

The sanctions handed down Monday against the university allow each of them the opportunity to go through the recruiting process all over again. Only this time, they won't have nearly as much time to make up their minds.

N.C. State coach Tom O'Brien said he'll look at recruiting Penn State players.

Penn State's returning players and incoming freshmen will be allowed to transfer to any school without sitting out a year of competition. They might even be allowed to pick a school that already has 85 scholarship players, the maximum allowed under NCAA guidelines.

The NCAA is considering waiving scholarship limits to allow schools to make room for former Penn State players, as long as they make a proportional adjustment the following year. For instance, if a school adds a Penn State transfer to go up to 86 scholarship players this year, it would have to go down to 84 scholarships the following year.

That essentially makes every Penn State player a free agent. While no Penn State players have indicated they would take this option just yet, some of them could garner plenty of interest from other FBS programs.

What team in need of running backs wouldn't like to add Silas Redd, a 1,241-yard rusher last year? And just about any defense in the country could make room for linebackers Gerald Hodges or Michael Mauti.

"I think if you have available scholarships and you have a need - and they have someone who fits that need - you'd be crazy not to [recruit Penn State players]," said North Carolina State coach Tom O'Brien, no relation to Penn State coach Bill O'Brien.

Tom O'Brien wondered how many upperclassmen would leave the school where they'd spent their entire careers, but he thought the four-year bowl ban and scholarship limits could entice many of Penn State's younger players to look elsewhere.

O'Brien should understand the situation. One of his former players went through a similar experience last summer.

Former all-ACC quarterback Russell Wilson left N.C. State under the NCAA's graduate transfer rule last year after O'Brien named Mike Glennon the Wolfpack's starting quarterback. Wilson, who didn't have to sit out a season because he already had earned his degree, went on to lead Wisconsin to a Big Ten title in his lone season with the Badgers.

Plenty of other players have taken similar advantage of the NCAA's graduate transfer rule. For instance, Wisconsin's starting quarterback this fall likely will be Maryland transfer and former ACC rookie of the year Danny O'Brien.

But, of course, this scenario is different.

The Penn State players face a situation more similar to what USC's players encountered in the summer of 2010, when the Trojans received NCAA sanctions that included a two-year bowl ban.

Under terms of the penalty, USC's players also were allowed to transfer without sitting out a year. The most noteworthy player to capitalize on the situation was defensive lineman Malik Jackson, who earned all-SEC honors at Tennessee and went to the Denver Broncos in the fifth round of the most recent NFL Draft.

Penn State's players might be more tempted to leave.

After all, Penn State faces a four-year postseason ban, twice as long as USC's. That means the incoming freshmen who get redshirted this fall would be the only players on Penn State's roster with any hope of representing the Nittany Lions in a bowl game for the remainder of their college careers.

So do they stay true to their original school, even though the circumstances have changed dramatically? Or do they go somewhere that offers them a postseason opportunity?

They won't have much time to make up their minds.

The start of the season is less than six weeks away, and most players would want to join their new teams in time for the beginning of preseason practice early next month.

US rolls past Spain in final tuneup

BARCELONA,Spain (AP) -- Gold medal at stake or nothing at all, the U.S. Olympic basketball team was bringing its best Tuesday.

Being back on the Dream Team's turf required it.

Carmelo Anthony came off the bench to score 23 of his 27 points in the first half, and the Americans beat Spain 100-78 in a rematch of the gold-medal game - and possible preview of the next one.

LeBron James added 25 and Kevin Durant had 13, including 10 in the first 3 1/2 minutes of the third quarter to help the U.S. break open the teams' final exhibition game before heading to London.

"We knew that this was a big game," U.S. guard Chris Paul said. "When Coach K talked to us, he told us this was probably the biggest game here in Barcelona since the `92 team was here, so we approached it like that and it was a good win for us."

The teams played a memorable gold-medal game four years ago, the Americans pulling away for a 118-107 victory after leading by only four points with under 2 1/2 minutes left.

This one turned out much easier once the U.S. controlled the final three quarters.

"It was a good test for us tonight, but the exhibition games are over, the friendlies are over and we look forward to the real challenge of going to London," James said.

Pau Gasol scored 19 points and Oklahoma City forward Serge Ibaka, a native of the Republic of Congo who became a Spanish national last year, had 16.

Both teams have been weakened by injuries, with the U.S. missing Dwyane Wade, Dwight Howard and Chris Bosh, all key contributors in Beijing, along with Derrick Rose. The Spaniards are without point guard Ricky Rubio, and All-Star center Marc Gasol, Juan Carlos Navarro and Rudy Fernandez have battled injuries this year.

Chris Paul of the US Men's Senior National Team, left, dives for the ball against Sergio Llul of Spain Men's Senior National Team during an exhibition match between Spain and the United States Tuesday, July 24, 2012, in Barcelona, Spain, in preparation for the 2012 Summer Olympics.

They're still the best two teams in the world and favored to meet again in the Aug. 12 gold-medal game. Spain would have a different look, as Marc Gasol was held out of this one while recovering from a left shoulder injury and backup point guard Sergio Rodriguez also sat out.

It may not matter if the Americans play like this in the games that count.

Spain's players said Monday that while they would try to win this tune-up, the bigger priority was preparing for London. The Americans responded that the Spaniards, playing in front of their home fans, would be compelled to go all out in hopes of a victory.

Spain seemed to be playing for real, but was simply overmatched and the Americans eventually ran away from them.

"Well, it was definitely a game that we would have loved to play better as a team," Gasol said. "We made too many mistakes which they capitalized and they played their game. They're a quick unit, very athletic and once they were able to convert a few fast-break opportunities due to our turnovers, it was hard for us."

The Americans, who would have had Howard, Bosh and Blake Griffin on this roster, believe their quickness and versatility will overcome their size problems, and that's what happened in this one.

Spain's size advantage was evident early, especially once Tyson Chandler, the only center on the U.S. roster, went to the bench with two quick fouls. The Spanish pounded the ball inside to Ibaka, who accounted for three straight Spain baskets on dunks, and the Americans were forced to use a timeout - that never happened 20 years ago when the Dream Team ruled Barcelona - after Victor Sada's jumper made it 22-13 with 1:40 left in the opening period.

But though Gasol and Ibaka had an obvious advantage inside, neither could deal with Anthony on the perimeter. He made five 3-pointers in the first half while often appearing unguarded behind the arc.

He opened and closed a 20-6 burst with 3-pointers as the Americans went from four down to ahead 42-32 with about 3 minutes left in the half. They later went up by 13 before taking a 48-40 lead into the locker room.

Gasol had the first basket of the second half, but Durant dominated the next few minutes as the Americans extended the lead to 60-46. Russell Westbrook scored seven straight later in the period, his steal and dunk making it 69-48 with 4:19 left.

Spain trimmed it to 12 later in the period, but never had a real shot of getting back into it.

London Olympic medals: most expensive

LONDON (AP)--The eight tons of gold, silver and copper unearthed from mines in Mongolia and Utah and now under guard at the Tower of London is the largest ever haul used to make Olympic medals.

"The medals arrived at the tower on July 2, and we will keep them under tight security" Tracey Sands, spokeswoman for Historic Royal Palaces, said.

The 4,700 Olympic and Paralympic medals will be guarded alongside Britain's crown jewels until they are presented on the podium.

"For centuries the Tower of London has protected some of this country's greatest treasures so there can be no better sanctuary for the 2012 medals—the most precious possession any athlete could hope to possess," said London Mayor Boris Johnson.

The winners' medals are certainly precious, even though gold only makes up a tiny portion of their alloy.

A gold medal weighing about 410 grams contains only six grams of gold—1.34 percent of its weight -- the remainder being silver compound (92.5 percent) and copper.

However, the recent gold and silver booms that have seen prices double since the 2008 Games in Beijing ensure that the medals are the most expensive in Olympic history.

AP

The prized London Olympics medals, designed by British artist David Watkins, are locked at the Tower of London.

Added to this, the dimensions of the London medals (85 millimetres in diameter and seven millimetres thick) make them the heaviest ever struck for the Summer Olympics.

In Beijing, the medals were around half as heavy at 200 grams.

But the London medals remain below the record set by the Winter Games in Vancouver in 2010, where the medals weighed up to 576 grams.

British artist David Watkins designed the medals, which depict Nike, the Greek goddess of victory.

The reverse bears the London Games logo in front of a radiating star motif, representing the spirit and tradition of the Olympics, and the River Thames, for the city of London.

"If there's the slightest blemish, we reject them," said Fergus Feeney, programme director at the 1,000-year-old Royal Mint, which produces Britain's currency and made the Olympic medals.

The coveted discs were each processed 15 times in a huge hydraulic press known as the Colossus.

The gold, silver and copper was extracted by Anglo-Australian global mining giant Rio Tinto from its Oyu Tolgoi plant in Mongolia and the Kennecott mine in Utah in the United States.

The choice was controversial as its extraction techniques in Utah are considered by some to be polluting.

"Rio Tinto is not Olympic calibre in its behaviour toward its own workers and their families," said Ken Neumann, national director in Canada of the United Steelworkers trade union.

At least the winning athletes can be assured the medals will be better than those issued the last time London hosted the Olympics in 1948.

Then, post-war austerity meant that the medals were of poor quality and needed regular regilding.

Beckham says he has role in opening ceremony

LONDON (AP)—David Beckham will have a role in the opening ceremony at the Olympics.

The English football star had hoped to play for Britain's team at the games, but he was not included in the squad by coach Stuart Pearce. There will, however, be a spot for him Friday at Olympic Stadium.

"It is some kind of role in the opening ceremony, which I am honored to be involved in because obviously I was involved in the start process with this seven years ago," Beckham told The Associated Press. "And for Seb (Sebastian Coe) to have kept me involved, I'm very proud of that."

But in keeping with the national "save the surprise" campaign, Beckham wouldn't divulge any further details about his role.

One obvious role would be to serve as one of the final torchbearers to help complete the 8,000-mile (12,900-kilometer) relay around Britain in the stadium, although it is expected a former Olympian will be given the honor of lighting the cauldron.

There is speculation Muhammad Ali could also play a role in the opening ceremony after the boxing great came to London to appear Tuesday alongside Beckham at an event in London.

"He stood for so many amazing things throughout his life, whether it's what he did in the ring or outside of the ring," Beckham said at the Beyond Sport conference. "His life and his career was all about survival and he is an amazing man."

During the games, Beckham plans to watch some sports when he can around fulfilling his Major League Soccer duties in the United States.

"I'll be going back and forward but I'll definitely be trying to get to a few events," he said.

Beckham has sensed Olympic fever gripping London with just three days until the opening ceremony.

"I was at the stadium yesterday and the park yesterday and you can feel the kind of atmosphere building, the excitement building," Beckham said. "I was brought up around this side of London and, you know, to actually see the changes that have happened and the excitement that's going on is a proud moment."

But Beckham is saddened that he won't get to play in Britain's first Olympic football team since the 1960 Games despite making 115 appearances for England, a record for a player other than a goalkeeper.

The former England captain still hasn't given up hope of representing his country again.

"I'll always have ambitions in football as long as I am playing," Beckham said. "I might be 37 years old but I still want to continue to win championships. I still want to continue to be the best that I can be and continue to represent my country in any way, shape or form."

SUFA softball fundraising tournament this weekend

The SUFA Softball Association will be holding a fundraising slow-pitch softball tournament this weekend at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Proceeds from the tournament will go toward the group's trip to Boise, Idaho where they will compete in 8th CNMI Labor Day Softball Tournament. This is the second time that the annual competition will be held in Boise.

The weekend fundraiser will follow a double-elimination format with one modified coed rule, which stipulates that at least two female players must be both in the batting lineup and on the field at all times.

Prizes are up for grabs, but have not been determined yet.

SUFA, which in Chamorro means pushing or hitting something, is a non-profit organization that raises its own funds every year in order to represent the CNMI in the popular Labor Day event held in the mainland. The event has also been held in Las Vegas, Seattle, San Diego, and Portland in the past years.

CNMI teams from Idaho, California, Washington, Hawaii, Arizona, Nevada have also traveled annually to be a part of the competition.

This year marks SUFA's fifth appearance in the event.

PAC-Chain topped 20 other squads to win last year's competition held in Portland, Oregon, and unfortunately SUFA was the first team ousted last year. This year, SUFA has beefed up its roster and vows for a better performance in the September 3 tournament.

For more information about the fundraiser, contact Joe Flores at 483-7848 or SUFA secretary Alfreda Camacho at 287-3818 or email teamsufa@gmail.com. ***(Walter Cepeda Sutherland)***

SAKUDI

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meeting 670 Babes tonight for the second and last title berth tonight. Before losing to Sakudi, 670 Babes downed Check It Out last week.

Enamo Meta then eliminated Check It Out after pulling off a 7-4 upset in the women's lower bracket elimination game last Tuesday. In the men's division, Natibu ousted defending champion Man Amigos, 16-3, in their lower bracket knockout match. Natibu was scheduled to face the No. 8 ranked SaiPal (8) last night for the right to face Gagu Eyez for the last finals ticket.

WOMEN'S
Sakudi 7, 670 Babes 0

Sakudi had five hits out of the gate for an early 3-0 lead. Kikki Aldan ripped a two-RBI drive that was followed by an RBI single from Eileen Babuta.

The defending champion was hung up in a double play in the second inning, but later stuffed the 670 Babes with the bases loaded in the top of the third inning. Both teams played well defensively, but Sakudi eventually weaseled out four much-needed runs to close the fifth inning off an early error, four hits, and three fielder's choices. Liz Lebria nailed a two-RBI single and Babauta bagged another RBI base knock.

From there, Sakudi went on to hold down its rival and kept the shutout victory intact.

Enamo Meta 7, Check It Out 4

Enamo Meta sprung out to an early 2-0 lead, thanks to a two-RBI base knock in the opening frame.

Check It Out then knotted the game off an error and a sacrifice fly from Keina Rogopes in the second inning.

However, Check It Out had trouble stringing together enough hits to make it home through the middle innings, allowing Enamo Meta to move in front, 4-2, in the fourth inning off three hits and a sacrifice fly by Felisha Brel. Enamo Meta got the other run off an RBI single.

Check It Out endured three strikeouts at the start of the fifth and Enamo Meta was gifted a run off errors in the bottom sign. Check It Out then tried to get its engine started for a late rally, but was held to only two runs in the final two side changes.

Enamo Meta secured a couple of insurance runs in the bottom of the sixth inning, thanks to another error and an RBI single.

Sakudi 13, Rookies 0

Sakudi enjoyed an early 3-0 lead in the first inning of its opening playoff match on July 23, thanks to the Rookies' early jitters out on the field.

The Rookies regrouped and landed a nice 1-6-3 double play to close the second inning, but Sakudi managed to get a runner to the plate in the third from a sacrifice fly by Thelma Mizer. Sakudi then went ahead, 6-0, in the fourth off a fielder's choice, an error, and an RBI single.

The defending champion closed the bottom frame with a nifty double play by shortstop Juljen Ngeskebei, who snagged a liner and flipped to second base. That triggered Sakudi's three-run surge in the fifth inning. Sakudi bashed five more hits, but scored mainly off errors. Eileen Babauta belted an RBI double.

The deathblow came in the sixth inning when Sakudi worked around four runs off two hits and more defensive blunders. Liz Lebria bagged an RBI single.

Though the Rookies had the ability to hit the ball, they stranded seven runners and failed to score a single run.

MEN'S
Natibu 16, Man Amigos 13

A pair of solo home runs and a fielder's choice in the first two inning gave visiting Natibu an early edge, but Man Amigos' Eric Palacios blasted a three-run bomb to lock it at 3-all in the third frame.

An inning later, the count shifted to 8-6, in favor of Natibu, which countered a two-run long ball from Man-Amigos' Roy Celis and a sacrifice fly from Julian Camacho with six hits. Natibu got an RBI single from BJ Sablan, an RBI double from Oscar Sablan, and a two-RBI base rip from Dustin Quitano.

After both teams scored a couple of runs in the fifth inning, it became a one-run game in the sixth as Man Amigos answered the pair of two-run homers from Natibu's Bruce Norita and Oscar Sablan with five runs in the top portion. Man Amigos' five runs came off a three-run solo shot, an error, and an RBI single from James Fleming.

Natibu were then gifted with two big runs in the top of the seventh as Man Amigos committed some critical errors.

TSUNAMI

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Daehun Kim (22.47 seconds), Isaiah Aleksenko (23.03 seconds), Mickiel Torres (25.50 seconds), Ashley Dangol (27.47 seconds), Shaunalyn Babauta (30.12 seconds), and Nelson Battalones (40.48 seconds).

In the 25m backstroke race, 13-year-old Lalaine Santomin had the best time at 24.46 seconds, followed by Megumi Yoshino (24.67 seconds) and Kenshiro Yanai (25.47 seconds). Also joining the shortened race were Towa Irinaka (26.58 seconds), Aika Watanabe (27.28 seconds), Jhota Yoshino (28.50 seconds), Jzl Santomin (28.88 seconds), and Nanaka Watanabe (29.21 seconds).

Deejay Santomin was also the fastest in the 15m freestyle, timing in at 16.81 seconds and beating Dan Illahi (19.03 seconds) and Batallones (19.59 seconds). Completing the finishers were Aleksenko (21.07 seconds), Torres (21.19 seconds), Daehun Kim (22.12 seconds), Sydney Lim (23.27 seconds), Dangol (25.44 seconds), and Babauta (26.71 seconds).

Deejay's older sister, Santomin reigned in the 25m freestyle with her 19.88 seconds, outracing Megumi Yoshino (23.10) and Kenshiro Yanai (23.68 seconds). Irinaka placed fourth with his 23.90 seconds, followed by Jhota Yoshino (24.91 seconds), Aika (25.22 seconds) and Nanaka Watanabe (26.96 seconds), and Jzl Santomin (27.29 seconds).

Meanwhile, besides the four shortened races, Tsunami Saipan also held four regular events in the swim meet.

Angel Marie Tan and Ryuto Yanai had a one-on-one race in the 100m breaststroke with the former timing in at 1:27.80 and the latter clocking in at 1:43.26.

In the 200m individual medley, there was a three-swimmer race among Tan, Takumi Sugie, and Kaito Yanai. Sugie had the fastest time at 2:35.53 (AA standard), while Yanai submitted 2:36.52, nearly breaking the CNMI record (2:35.68) in the 11 to 12 age group). Tan tallied 2:55.58.

In the 50m backstroke, 12 Tsunami Saipan swimmers completed the race with Miku Tammy setting a new age group record (girls 11 to 12) after logging 37.58 seconds. Yeop Lee owned the fastest time in the meet's 50m backstroke after recording 33.48 seconds. His sister, Heon, nailed the third best time at 40.41 seconds, followed by Hiroto Yanai (40.65 seconds), Ryuto Yanai (42.62 seconds), Yuuki Nishida (45.27 seconds), Mark Maestro (48.90 seconds), Kyona Rivera (55.06 seconds), Kenshiro Yanai (58.11 seconds), Karen Irinaka (1:01.35), Kathrine Illahi (1:02.43), and Aika Watanabe (1:03.65).

For the last race of the day—the 50m freestyle, Tammy had another record-breaking time (31.87 seconds), while Sugie and Yeop Lee submitted the Top 2 best times at 29.05 seconds and 29.97 seconds, respectively. Hiroto Yanai also joined the race and had the fourth fastest time at 32.31 seconds.

Other Tsunami Saipan swimmers who completed the final event of the competition were Heon Lee (38.35 seconds), Nishida (39.11 seconds) Maestro (40.65 seconds), Rivera (43.59 seconds), Karen Irinaka (43.74 seconds), Kenshiro Yanai (45.75 seconds), Kathrine Illahi (47.10 seconds), Aika Watanabe (54.74 seconds), and Towa Irinaka (59.48 seconds).

TWO

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The Yankees' Frank Robert answered with an RBI single in the top half of the fifth, but the Aces motored ahead, 7-1, in the bottom portion, The Aces loaded the bases right away, forcing Yankees' JP Camacho to relieve starter Dave Camacho. After Maratita stung the Yankees with an RBI base poke, the pitching switch did not work, as Taisacan this time connected on an RBI knock and the Aces scored two more runs off sketchy pitches and an error.

Taisacan remained in control and had plenty of gas in the tank and his teammates complemented his effort with a pair of insurance runs in the seventh inning. JD Dikito tripled home the workhorse pitcher and scored off a sacrifice fly from Derek Aughenbaugh.

Taisacan then held the Yankees to just one run in the final stand. He went all nine and gave up zero earned runs off six hits and three walks with four strikeouts. Taisacan also forced 11 putouts and seven groundouts.

Juan Iguel swung 5-for-5 with two runs and two stolen bases for the Aces, while Maratita went 3-for-4 with two RBIs, two runs, a stolen base, and a base on balls. Robert batted 2-for-3 with an RBI and Gary Cruz also bashed two hits for the Yankees.

Aces 4, Angels 2

The Aces' defense blinked first in the bottom of the fourth inning, allowing the Angels to take a 1-0 edge. Franco Flores led off with a hit and found his way home off an error.

Aces' speedster Jesus Iguel then hustled out an error in the top of the fifth and was escorted to the plate via a sacrifice fly from Nokki Saralu. The Angels' Nunu Kapileo countered in the bottom frame with an RBI single that brought in Jay Camacho to recapture the lead, 2-1.

The Aces were stuffed with two runners on base in the sixth, but managed to knot the score up at 2-all in the seventh inning off some costly infield errors.

The chess match continued through regulation and both pitchers show life in their arms in the late innings. They were rewarded with improved defense as the game went into extra innings, but eventually someone had to be declared the winner.

The Aces' top of the order bashed three big hits to start the 12th inning, took the lead, and held strong on the field for the final three outs. The Aces' Jesus Iguel led off the inning with a hit and was doubled to the dish by Maratita, who then scored off Taisacan's double.

As for the Angels offense, they had two men on the path in the final stand, but could not bring them to the plate.

Winning pitcher Juan Iguel gave up one earned run off nine hits, three walks, and a hit batsman with three strikeouts in 12 innings. Jesus Iguel scored three runs.

Brewers 17, D-9ers 1

The D-9ers held the Brewers to just a run in the first two innings, but the latter started the third with a five-run gash off four hits for the breakaway. Darren Pua cracked a two-RBI single and later scored off a passed ball, while Manny Sablan also grounded in a run.

The D-9ers' lone run came in the bottom portion when BJ Lizama drove in Derek Sablan.

The Brewers then trotted ahead, 10-1, in the fourth inning off three hits, an error and a fake tag violation. RBI leader Byron Kaipat belted an RBI double and teammate Mike Pangelinan hit an RBI single in the mix.

The Brewers added four more runs in the sixth inning, primarily off errors by a ruffled D-9ers clan. Ton Manibusan was credited with an RBI in the mess and the D-9ers went 1-2-3 in the bottom side.

Three more runs would be added to the Brewers in the top of the sixth and despite their big lead, the run-rule could not be implemented unless seven innings were completed. The Brewers' Kaipat then logged another RBI double and Sablan picked up a two-RBI base rip in what were essentially bonus at bats in the top of the seventh. The D-9ers loaded the bases in the final stand, but Brewers' closer Vince Cepeda eventually settled down and left them there for the save.

Winning pitcher Tom Camacho gave up just one earned run off six hits, a walk, and a hit batsman with five strikeouts through six innings.

SSC

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Hajj and Ed Ewing were among the finishers and completed their first Eagle Ray race through the help of paddler Ann Jordan. Also debuting in the Paupau Beach to Managaha crossing were Robyn Wondrasek, Pejman Kharrazian, and Adam Hardwicke. Travis Spaeth was Wondrasek's kayaker, Jeff Taylor helped out Hardwicke, and Carol Lynn Pierce and Yogi Singh escorted Kharrazian.

Joining the Eagle Ray first timers were SSC assistant coach Jennifer Pierce and SSC Masters Sibylla Guerrero.

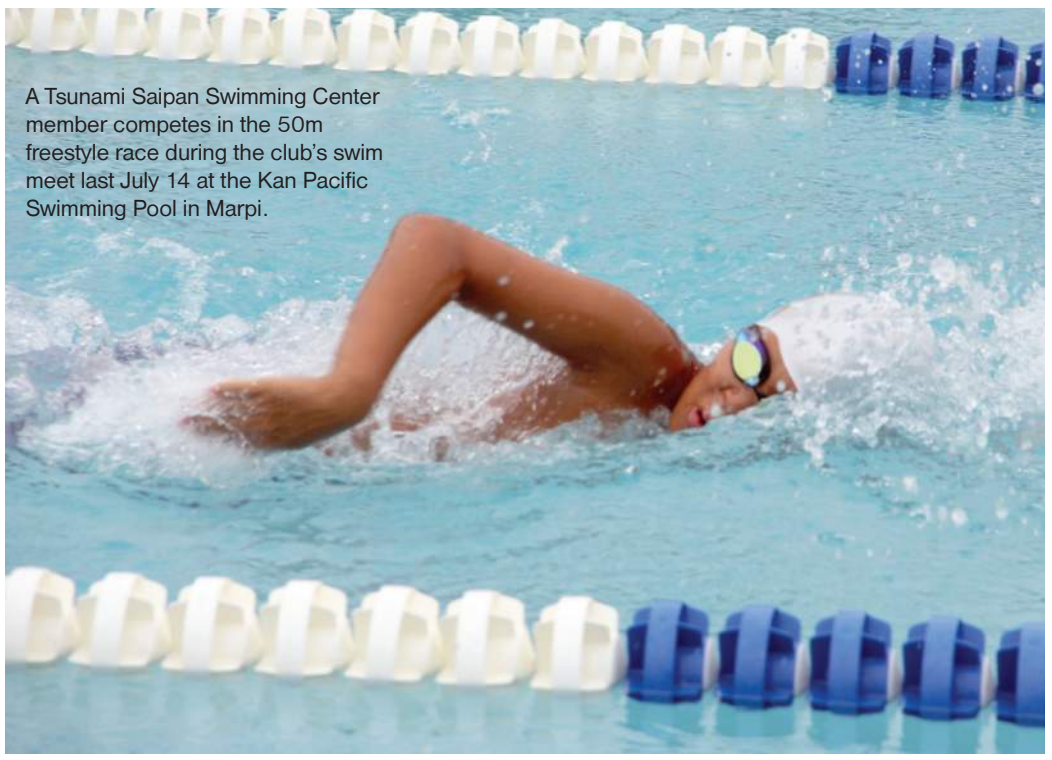
From the Managaha Island, swimmers rode the Tasi Tours ferry that docked to Smiling Cove Marina and then went back to PauPau for another ocean swim—the inaugural 3.5K PauPau to Tanapag crossing.

Ten swimmers and two kayakers joined the open water swim from PauPau to Tanapag boat ramp, including SSC Masters Suzy Kindel, who was celebrating her 61st birthday that day.

The club also welcomed back Monica Yamaguchi during the inaugural race. Yamaguchi is now based in Tokyo and on her visit to Saipan, she swam with Joshua Berger, Paul Viator, Harumi Suzuki, Florence Antonio, Lemur Macon, Manny Sitchon, and Tamio Nishikido. Nicky Nichols and Jun Lee were the group's kayakers and the 10 swimmers completed the crossing in one hour and 20 minutes.

Tsunami Saipan Swim Meet

PHOTOS BY
ROSELYN B. MONROYO



A Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center member competes in the 50m freestyle race during the club's swim meet last July 14 at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

A Tsunami Saipan female member races in the 50m backstroke.

A Tsunami Saipan swimmer plunges into the pool during the 15m backstroke event.

Tsunami Saipan head coach Hiro Kimura gives instructions to swimmers before the race.

Kaito Yanai makes a turn during the 200m individual medley race.

Kyona Rivera gets ready for the 50m backstroke race.

Angel Marie Tan does the breaststroke part of the 200m individual medley swim.

A Tsunami Saipan rookie debuts in the 15m backstroke race.

Tsunami Saipan head coach Hiro Kimura helps a swimmer out of the pool.

Ryuto Yanai races in the 50m backstroke event.

TSL SPORTS COMPLEX
Activity Schedule for July 26, 2012
2012 Youth Badminton Summer Clinic
4th Session
8:00 AM to 10:00 AM: 7 to 10 years old
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM: 11 to 18 years old
Gillette
MULTIPURPOSE GYMNASIUM
2012 Summer Soccer Camp
4th Session
8:00 AM to 9:30 AM: U10 • 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM: U8
SAIPAN SOCCER SCHOOL

US rolls past Spain in final tuneup

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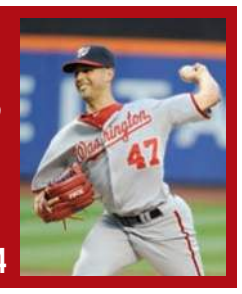
Saipan Tribune
Sports

Nationals end Dickey's streak, beat Mets



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Sakudi returns to women's finals

Sakudi's Thelma Mizer tosses the ball over to first base during their semis game against the 670 Babes in the Chamolinian softball league last Tuesday night at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Sakudi boosted its chances of clinching back-to-back championships after shutting out 670 Babes, 7-0, in the semifinals of the women's division of the Chamolinian Softball Association's 2nd Budweiser Softball League last Tuesday night at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

The big win gave Sakudi a twice-to-beat advantage in tomorrow's finals. The defending champion, which advanced to the semis after blanking the Rookies last Monday, 13-0, will still have to wait for the results of two knockout matches to determine its finals foe. The first game last night was between Enamo Meta and Rookies with the winner

See SAKUDI on Page 26

Tsunami Saipan rookies debut in short races

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center newcomers had their first taste of competition last July 14 when the club hosted a short meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

Over 20 Tsunami Saipan rookies participated in four shortened races—the 15m backstroke, 15m freestyle, 25m backstroke, and 25m freestyle—as part of their training sessions this summer and they are expected to complete the 50m swim at the start of the 2012-2013 season in September. "They will continue training hard for more than one month so they can try swimming 50m next season," Tsunami Saipan head coach Hiro Kimura said.

Tsunami Saipan started its series of short races via the 15mbackstroke event for the boys and girls 6 to 9 age group. Six-year-old Deejay Santomin posted the fastest time in the 15m backstroke after clocking in at 19.49 seconds. Sydney Lim and Dan Illahi came in at second and third with times of 20.79 seconds and 21.51 seconds, respectively, followed by

See TSUNAMI on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
A Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center member competes in the 50m freestyle race during a short meet on July 14 at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

SSC holds celebrated ocean swims

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Reunions, debuts, and birthday were the themes in the back-to-back ocean swims Saipan Swim Club hosted early this month.

Former SSC member Dirk Sharer, who is now based in the United Arab Emirates, was reunited with the club's masters swimmers via the 7K Eagle Ray Swim held on July 7. Sharer joined 8 other swimmers and seven kayakers in swimming from PauPau Beach to Managaha Island, according to a press release from SSC.

Sharer made it to the famous island with the help of paddler Shelley Kremer, while the 8 other swimmers also finished the challenging race with the assistance of their designated paddlers.

SSC water polo coach Jeff El-

See SSC on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Swimmers and kayakers get ready for the PauPau Beach to Managaha swim early this month.

Two in a row for Aces; Brewers win

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
Tan Holdings Brewers' Manny Sablan swings during their game against Rep. Ray Yumul D-9ers last Tuesday at the Francisco "Tan Ko Palacios" Ballfield.

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Aces gained two consecutive victories in the Saipan Major League Baseball Association to keep pace with the frontrunners in the seven-team field.

The Aces lit up the Saipan Stevedore Yankees, 9-2, on Monday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield and survived the defending champion St. Michael's Medical Response Angels (7-5), 4-2, in a 12-inning ordeal on July 16 to improve to an 8-3 record and retain the No. 3 spot in the team standings. The Aces are behind the Saipan Stevedore Yankees (9-2) and Tan Holdings Brewers (8-2).

The Brewers (8-2) preserved their half game lead over the Aces after a 17-1 victory over Rep. Ray Yumul D-9ers (1-10) in seven frames last Tuesday.

Completing the field are the IP&E-Shell Fielders (5-6) and the Rep. Sylvester Iguel Masters (1-11).

Aces 9, Yankees 2

Aces' hurler Ben Taisacan stymied the Yankees from the rubber for four innings, while his teammates finally broke the ice for a 3-0 favor in the fourth frame.

The Aces' Juan Iguel led off with a double and was driven to the plate by Juan Maratita, while Nokki Saralu drew a walk and snuck around off an infield error.

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